

Society

THE WORLD OF
CHILD PRODIGIES

JANUARY 2019 • ₹100

A MAGNA PUBLICATION
www.societymag.co.in

**MAMATA
BANERJEE**
AS PER
SHUTAPA
PAUL'S BOOK

BHUVAN BAM
UNCENSORED

Discovering
the **Mozart**
of Madras
AR RAHMAN

THE INDIAN WIRE BRAND WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATIONS.



———— All our products conform to CE, ROHS & REACH compliance. ————

**WHEN YOU WANT QUALITY WIRES,
CHOOSE RR KABEL.**

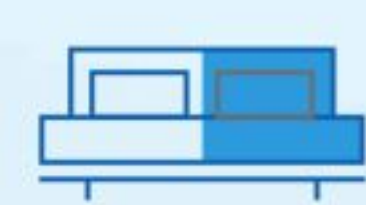


Sleepiwell
Comfort Cell



When you go to sleep the Comfort Cells GET to work.

A revolutionary technology that combines Firm and Plush cells, promising you maximum comfort and a blissful sleep.



Eliminates Partner Disturbance & Conforms to your Spine



Memory Foam Micro Comfort Cells for a plush feel



Unique Cell Design maximises Air Flow, keeping the mattress fresh



Ultra premium **Memory Foam** for superior comfort



Proprietary **"Quiltec Foam"** for unrivalled luxury



Assured Warranty
10 Years*
*Conditions apply.

Comfort Cell Mattresses are available as Series 4.0, 3.0, 2.0 and 1.0.



Health & Hygiene inspired by Nature and Science

When our Indian tradition of Neem meets modern Australian technology of Fresche, it becomes a blessing of good Health and Hygiene in our lives. The unique Neem Fresche Technology keeps you fresh and safe by preventing the breeding of dust mites, bacteria, fungi and it also eliminates bad odour.

Warranty valid only on purchases from Authorised Dealers and the Company Website.



WHY SETTLE FOR JUST A BATHROOM?

CREATE A COMPLETE WELLNESS ZONE AT HOME!



Jaquar

WELLNESS

Water, air, heat and light can work wonders for your body, and your mind. Create a Complete Wellness Zone in your home and heal the harm inflicted on you everyday by high-stress city life. Come home to the soothing power of Hydromassage, Airpool jets, dry heat, cleansing steam, Chromotherapy lights and much, much more. All backed by the assurance of Jaquar, India's most trusted bath brand.*

WHIRLPOOLS | SPAS | SAUNAS | STEAM SOLUTIONS | SHOWER PANELS

CONTENTS

Society

JANUARY 2019

EDITORIAL

EDITOR

Suchitra Iyer

DEPUTY EDITOR

Sapna Sarfare

RESIDENT EDITORS

Meeta Mishra (Delhi); CSS Latha (Chennai);
Nandini R Penna (Hyderabad);
Sudeshna Chakravarty (Kolkata)

SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

RahulPaul (Mumbai)

CORRESPONDENTS

Prashant Rane (New York)

EDITORIAL CO-ORDINATOR

Catherine Fernandes

VISUALISER

Jiji George

CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sanjit Sen

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Ashok Dhamankar

GROUP ADVERTISING MANAGER

Reena Chhabra

ASSOCIATE ADVERTISING MANAGER

Vineet Raut (Mumbai)

REGIONAL MANAGER (NORTH)

Kumar Shwetabh

BRANCH MANAGER

Rekha Kambhoj (Bangalore)
Suresh Chandrasekaran (Chennai)
Ashim Banik (Kolkata)

PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATION

Mangesh Rathod

CONTENT AND DIGITAL SALES

Manoj Bordikar

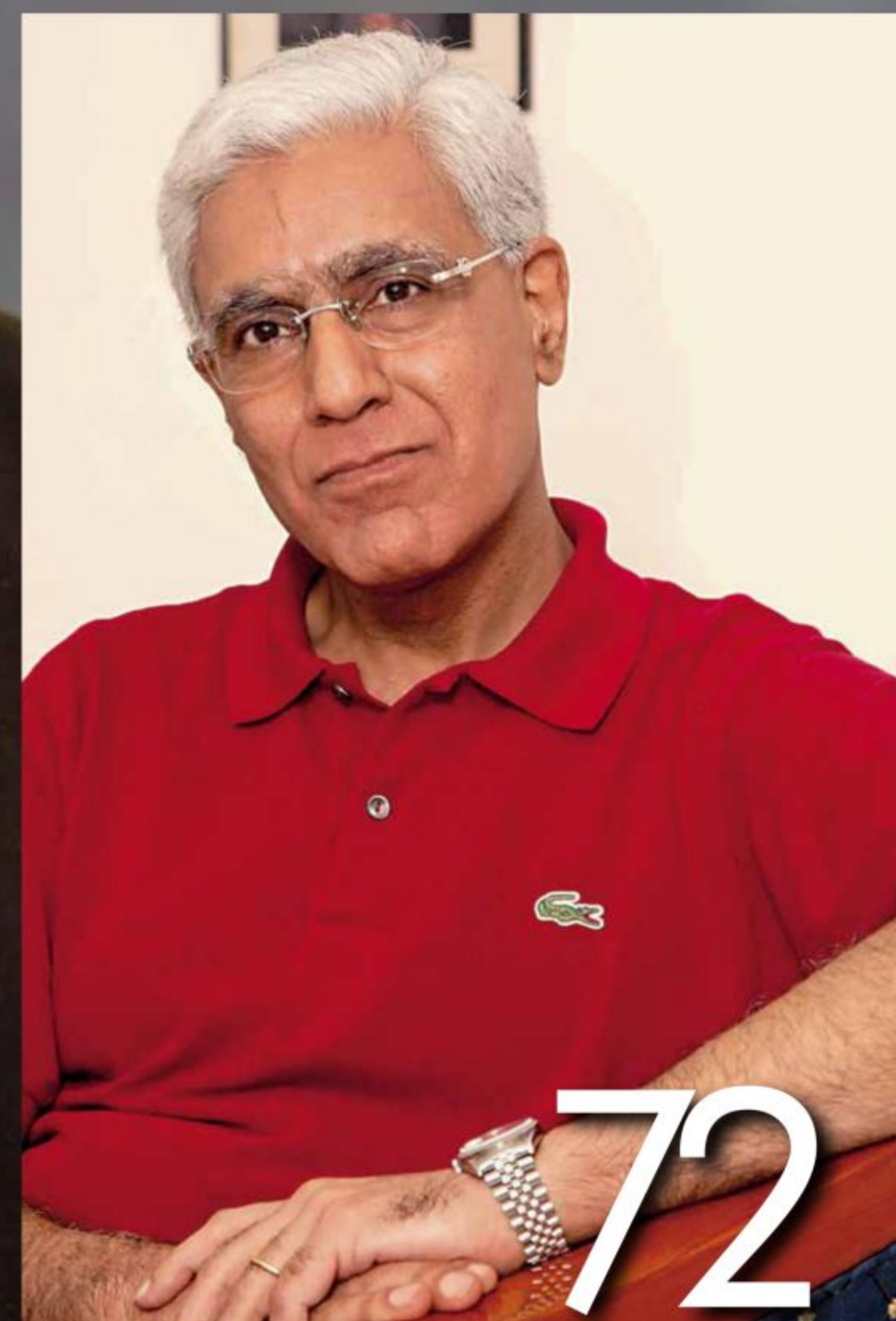
COVER DESIGN: JIJI GEORGE
PHOTOGRAPH: ARUN TITAN

28

'GREATNESS ONLY COMES WHEN YOU HAVE A TEAM THAT WORKS WITH PASSION.'

AR Rahman is a name that needs no introduction. *Society* speaks to the man behind the music and the music that made that very man into a legend. We also speak to young author Krishna Trilok who has written *Notes of a Dream*, the authorised biography of the 'Mozart of Madras'.

By CSS Latha



DEMYSTIFYING THE DEVIL

Suave and immaculate, India's most celebrated television personality Karan Thapar recapitulates his intriguing career. In this November 2011 interview, *Society* unravels the sharp and incisive television interviewer's soft and humble side.

By Tania Ameer Khan



**'STAYING
RELATABLE IS
NOT MUCH OF
A CHALLENGE.'**

YouTube sensation Bhuvan Bam speaks to *Society* about being creative with his super popular channel *BB Ki Vines*, crossing the 10M subscriber mark, being musically inclined and understanding what people want.

38

By Sapna Sarfare



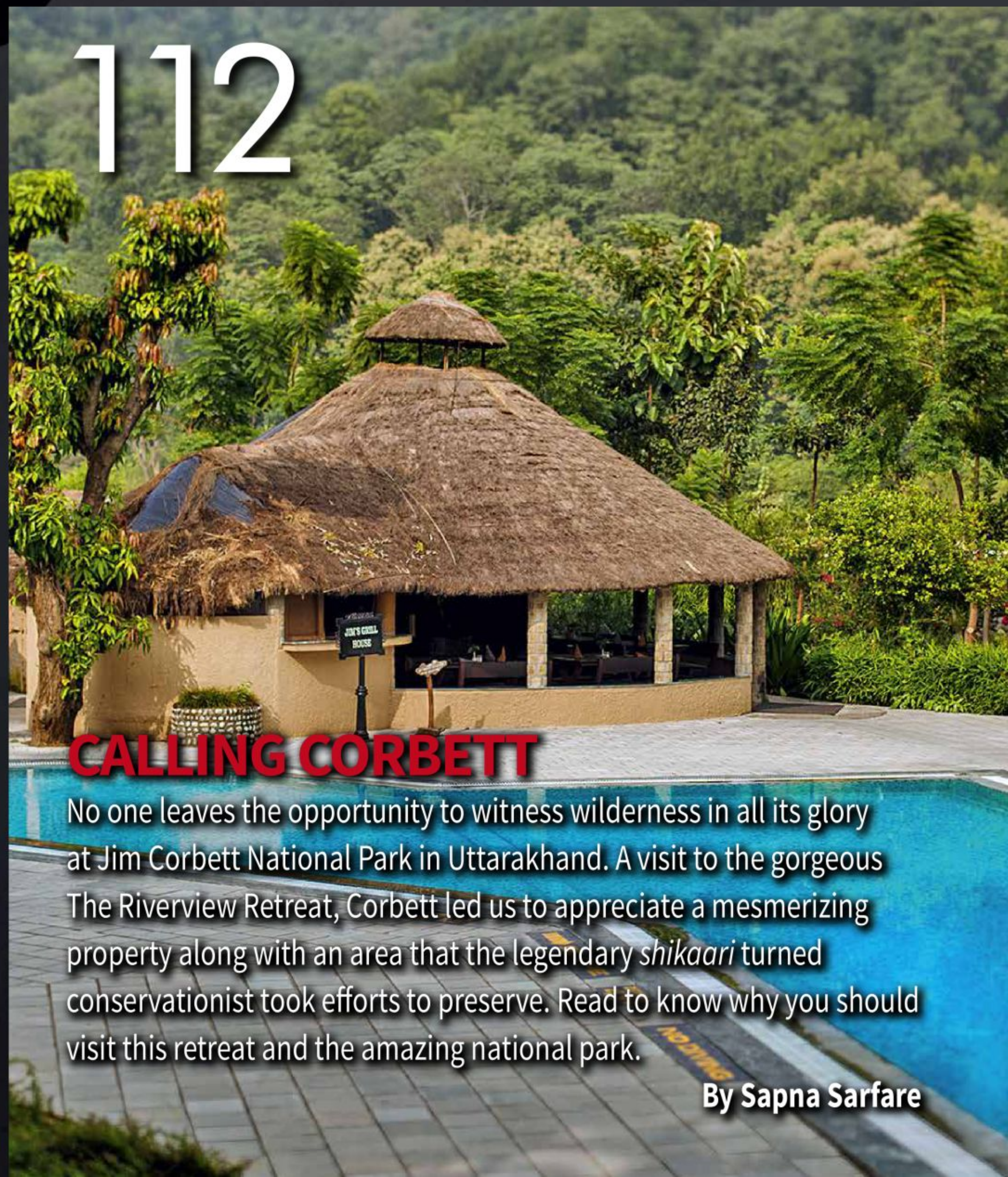
46

**'AS OF NOW, THERE IS NO
ONE QUITE LIKE MAMATA
BANERJEE ON THE ANVIL.'**

With the biography *Didi: The Untold Mamata Banerjee*, journalist and now author Shutapa Paul lets you understand the mind of a politician who has changed the dynamics of West Bengal and Indian politics. The author speaks about Banerjee and the biography's process in detail.

By Sapna Sarfare

112



CALLING CORBETT

No one leaves the opportunity to witness wilderness in all its glory at Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand. A visit to the gorgeous The Riverview Retreat, Corbett led us to appreciate a mesmerizing property along with an area that the legendary *shikaari* turned conservationist took efforts to preserve. Read to know why you should visit this retreat and the amazing national park.

By Sapna Sarfare

CONTENTS

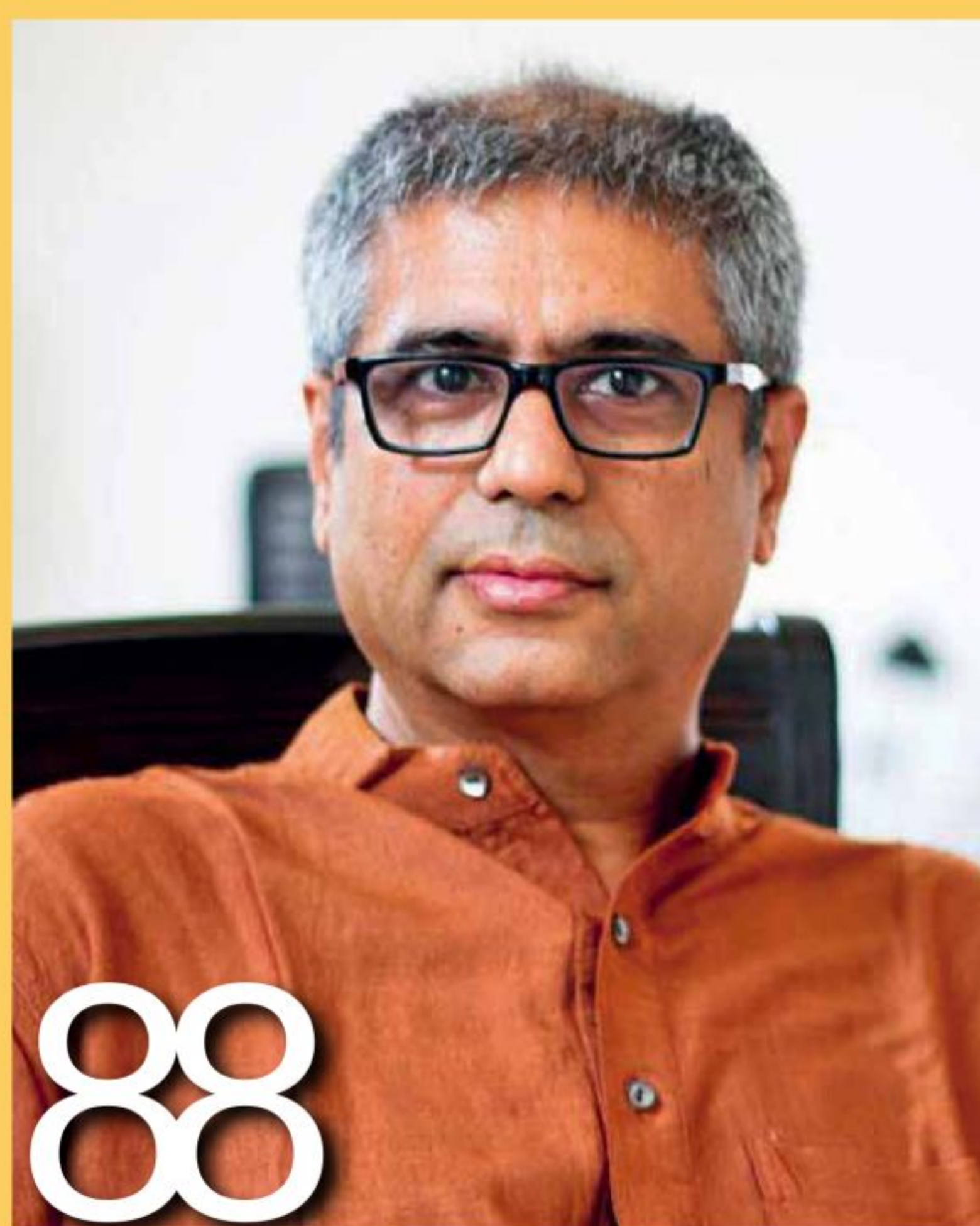


58

RISING TO STARDOM

It is not easy to create a name for oneself in the film industry. *Society* interacts with rising star Ali Fazal regarding breaking the perceptions of the industry and his on-going projects.

By Vani Krishnan



88

'SHE IS EXACTLY WHAT GANDHI WAS.'

Acclaimed theatre personality Mahesh Dattani is back in action with *Mengoubi: The Fair One*, an unusual play on the life and struggles of Manipuri civil rights activist Irom Sharmila. He speaks on working with eminent critic and writer Shanta Gokhale on this play, the play's importance for viewers and his theatre world.

By Sapna Sarfare

REGULARS

Postmortem	10
Backstage	09
Privileged Information	16
Society Says So	66
Melange	82
Party Central	128

EDITORIAL OFFICE & ADVERTISING

Mumbai:

Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., Magna House, 100/E, Old Prabhadevi Road, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400 025. Tel: 022-67091234, Fax: 022-67091208
E-mail: society@magnamags.com

New Delhi:

Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., 1501 A&B, Devika Tower, 6, Nehru Place, New Delhi 110 019.
Tel: 011-26002197/2209, 26442454/2473, 26475334,
Fax: 011-6286829,
E-mail: magnadel@vsnl.com

Kolkata:

Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., 4th Floor, Avantika Apartments, 140-B, Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata 700 029. Tel: 033-24748165, 24753846, 24768874/75,
Fax: 033-24753705,
E-mail: magnacal@vsnl.com

Pune:

Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., 402, Road No. 5, Sindh Co-op. Housing Society, Baner Road, Aundh, Pune 411007. Tel: 020-25850696 / 25851696, Fax: 020-25851796,
E-mail: magnapune@gmail.com

Bangalore:

Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., 1107, Barton Centre, 84/1, M.G.Road, Bangalore 560 001.
Tel : 080-25599646/7/8
Fax : 080-25586567,
E-mail: magnabang@gmail.com

Chennai:

Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., C-6, 2nd floor, Vasanth Apartments, Old No.75, New No.40, C.P.Ramaswamy Road, Alwarpet, Chennai-600 018. Tel: 044-2499 6752, 2466 0054 Tel / Fax: 044-2499 6501,
E-mail: magnachennai@vsnl.net

Hyderabad:

193, Road No.7, West Marredpally, Secunderabad 500 026. Tel: 040-7807642, TeleFax: 040-7800154

UK:

Magna Publishing Co (UK) Ltd., P.O.Box 5095, London, W1A 7WG, UK. Tel: 0207 486 8409, Fax: 0207 224 2699, Email: stardustmag@aol.com

USA & Canada:

Magna Publishing Inc. Magna Publishing Inc., 125 Central Park North, PH - 4, New York, NY 10026, Tel: (212) 725 7833, Fax: (212) 889 3250 Email: stardustmagazine@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: For India ₹ 1020/- (1 year/12 issues) Outside India ₹ 3000 (1 year/12 issues) Cheques to be drawn in favour of Magna Publishing Co.Ltd., Mumbai. SEND ALL Subscription inquiries/address changes to subscriptions@magnamags.com

Printed by Suchitra Iyer and published by her on behalf of Magna Publishing Co. Ltd. Magna House, 100/E, Old Prabhadevi Road, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400 025., and printed at Magna Graphics (India) Ltd., 101-C&D, Govt. Industrial Estate, Kandivli (West), Mumbai 400 067. Editor Suchitra Iyer
All objections disputes, differences, claims and proceedings are subject to Mumbai jurisdiction.

{ B A C K S T A G E }

Before we begin to talk about what we have in store for all you readers, let me wish you all a very happy 2019. New Year is always about fresh beginnings and letting go of our past baggage. Just believe in yourself. Enough of *gyaan*. Let's talk about the January issue.

We made 2019 big with the legend himself AR Rahman on the cover. No one can get bigger than Rahman himself. And boy, the interview is one special read. He has shared his thoughts on not just his music but also him as a musician, filmmaker and person. The interview came courtesy Krishna Trilok who has come out with Rahman's authorized biography— *Notes of a Dream*. Krishna has spoken about the book and also his own journey as an author. Good read is all we can say about our cover story.

The youngsters and the social media addicts are familiar with Bhuvan Bam whose *BB Ki Vines* has mushroomed into this amazing monster show on YouTube. We were fortunate enough to interview this young man on his stupendous success and hitting the 10M subscriber mark. Danish Sait is another young actor, comic, emcee, speaker and radio jockey who is making a mark for himself. Being such a multi-faceted person is a tough task and Danish has spoken about it at length in his interview.

2019 is going to be big for Indian politics and so we spoke to Shutapa Paul, a respected journalist about her book on Mamata Banerjee. The unauthorized biography *Didi: The Untold Mamata Banerjee* lets you understand this maverick politico with the power to change Indian politics.

The music and movie world is well-represented with interviews of the popular pop band Sanam and good-looking actor Ali Fazal. Sanam have crossed the 5M subscriber mark on YouTube and changing the way we listen to modern Indian pop. Ali too spoke on his journey as an actor in Bollywood and Hollywood.

We are excited to have acclaimed theatre doyen Mahesh Dattani speak about his new play on Manipuri activist Irom Sharmila written by Shanta Gokhale. He has explored Sharmila's story in an unusual manner and also spoken about his own journey in theatre. It is time to also get excited to discover the world of child prodigies and their journey towards achieving success without losing their innocence.

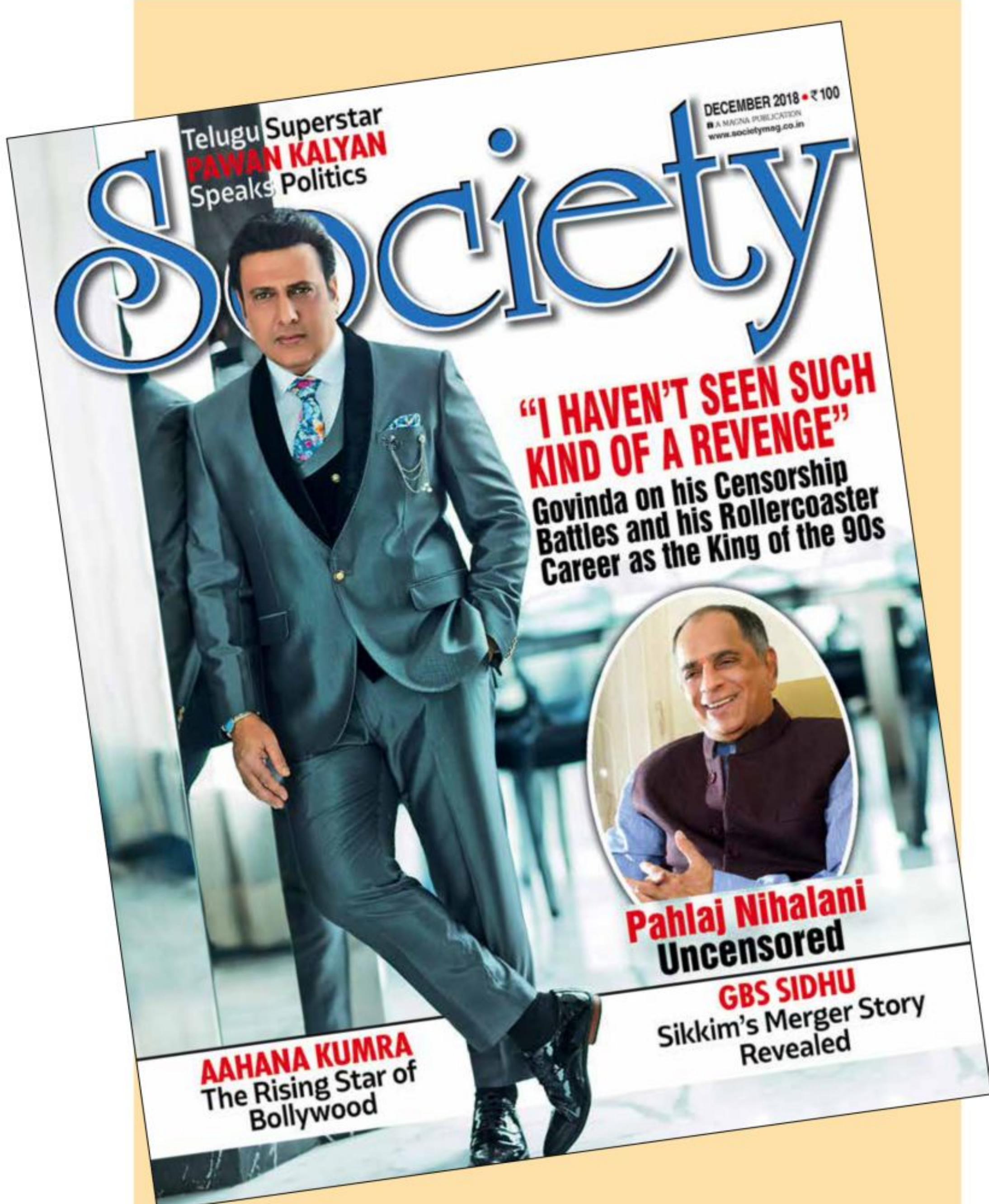
It is always lovely to plan an issue catering to all kinds of readers. Just remember to read them positively and also think of all things you can achieve in 2019. Our readers have it in them to touch the skies. Till next month, take care.

Sapna Sarfare

Deputy Editor
sapnas.society@gmail.com

Do follow us on  [societymagz](#) and  [Society_Magna](#) and  [SocietyMagazineIndia](#) and  www.societymag.co.in as well!





Please send your letters and feedback by e-mail to:

✉ society@magnamags.com

■ THE ULTIMATE ENTERTAINER

Kudos to you guys for featuring the one actor who ruled our film industry as the ultimate entertainer. I always loved Govinda's *masala* flicks. So when I saw him on the cover, I had to buy the issue. After reading his interview, I really felt bad that an actor of his caliber is suffering for no reason. At this time, he needs the support from the industry but is not getting it. I do hope *Rangeela Raja* works for Govinda.

NUTAN GUPTA | JAIPUR

■ QUITE SHADY

I was both amused and aghast on finding Govinda on your cover. I thought your esteemed magazine catered to the classes and not the masses. I guess you need people to pick up the copies. The interview was not that bad, though I feel his *Rangeela Raja* looks quite cheesy and I am not sure why they have made it. But considering he did entertain us with his antics once upon a time, I wish him all the best. Better cover stories next time, guys!

JHUMPA BASU | NEW DELHI



■ SO KEEN ON SIKKIM

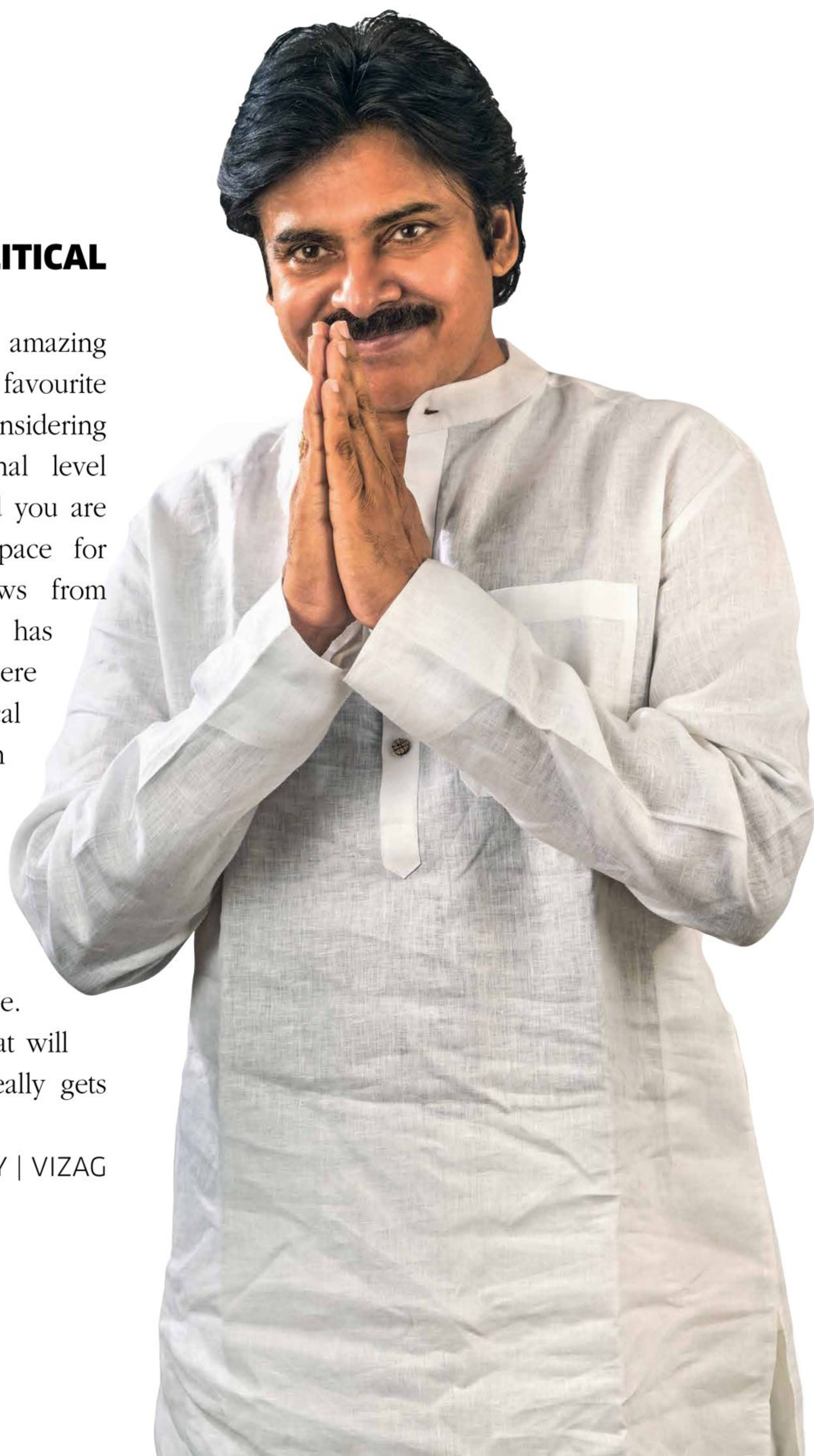
Society seems to be gung-ho on covering a lot of authors and literature. As an avid reader, I am only too happy with this interest. The reader in me was quite impressed with the interview of GBS Sidhu whose book *Sikkim: Dawn of Democracy* talks about how Sikkim was integrated in India. The role played by RAW is interesting as explained by Sidhu. After reading the interview, I am planning to get my copy and if I get a chance, I will surely get it signed by the author.

TARUN SRIDHAR | CHENNAI

■ SOUTH POLITICAL MAGIC

Thank you for this amazing interview of my favourite Pawan Kalyan. Considering *Society* is a national level magazine, I am glad you are keeping a good space for news and interviews from the South. Kalyan has a huge presence here and the recent political development in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana is getting heated. He seems to have good ideas and has his heart in place. But who knows what will happen when he really gets into politics?

PRATAP REDDY | VIZAG



■ A BIG ISSUE INDEED

I confess that I am someone who goes to the net to check even if I sneeze once. So when I read the online doctors story, I realised the gravity of the situation. So many of us have now resorted to going online for every minor medical reason. In fact, 'thanks to it', we have stopped going to doctors or question them without realising that this is not healthy attitude on a long run. It was nice of the writer to cover this issue in depth and make people realise their follies.

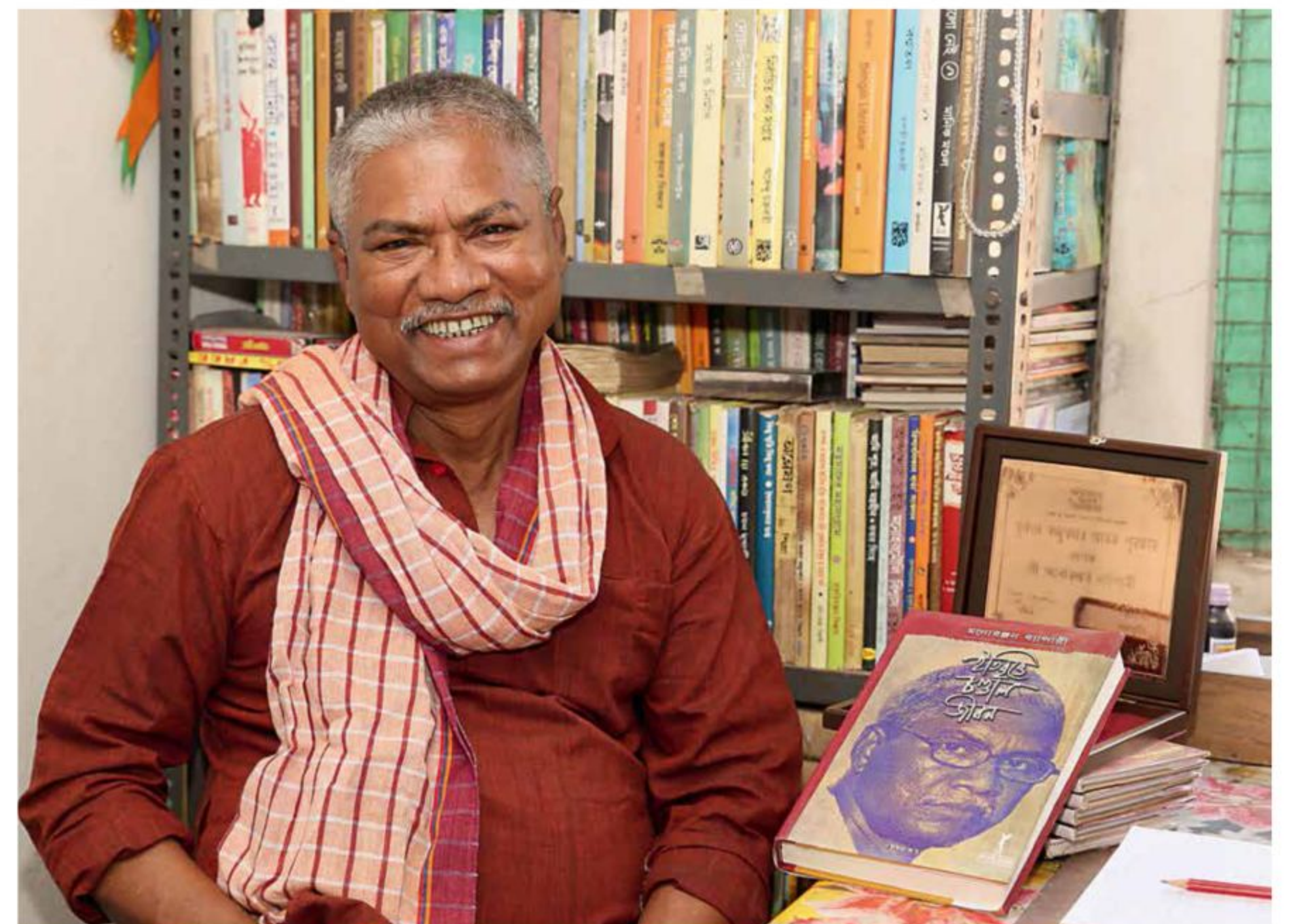
SEEMA SEN | PUNE



■ SUCH A SMALL HOMAGE

While I should give you credit for the tribute you gave to Stan Lee, I am seriously disappointed by the limited space allocated. I mean the man has been influential in changing the way we see comics, superheroes and now movies. Surely, he deserves a bigger space. But the homage was pretty sweet, especially the memories shared by Sahil Bulla and Sharad Devarajan.

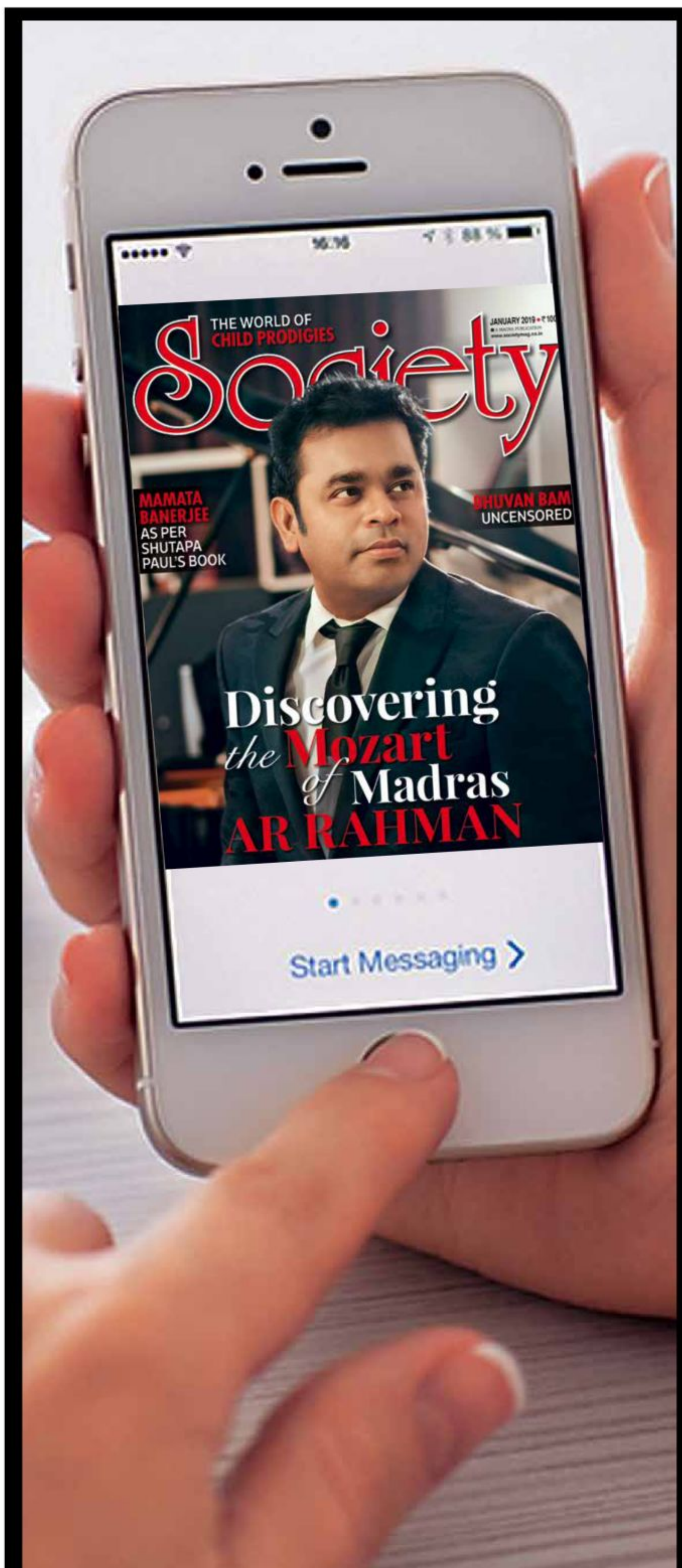
TINA D'SILVA | MUMBAI



■ A DIFFERENT READ

Bengal seems to produce some great writers, it seems. Honestly, I was not sure of whether I should read the interview of Manoranjan Byapari after seeing his photos. But after reading his interview, I admit my mistake of judging a book by its cover. His story is both touching and brutal. And I am happy he has found success through his books which are now translated into English. I am planning to pick his books and I hope others do too. We need more writers like him to let us know what happens around us.

SUMUKHI SHASTRI | LUCKNOW



Society

magazine now available in digital editions. Just hit....



Magzter.com



Readwhere.com



in.readly.com



■ RASHI WHO?

Why do you always pick unknown names or small-time celebs for personal style? I am sure you can do better than getting Rashi Mal for your columns. We really want to know about the personal style details of big stars who we adore. Buck up, *Society*! We want better from you guys.

GARIMA TALWAR |
KOLKATA

■ GOOD ART COVERAGE

Art in India, I feel, needs all the support it can get. And so when I read about the Kolkata Centre for Creativity which has been opened by Richa Agarwal, I was so happy. While reading the interview, it felt good to see high-profile people like her supporting artists of all kinds in their venture and providing a place to display their art. Artists in India are constantly struggling. Now at least, they have one place to call their own. Hats off to the Centre and Agarwal in being there for the creative spirits.

MILIND DEO | INDORE



Want to know the secret to Anti-aging?

It's in our wallcoverings.

Anti-aging Wallcoverings



SPECIAL VALUE PACKAGES

Full Room Walls	7 Rolls	₹ 15,500 onwards
1 BHK Walls	17 Rolls	₹ 37,500 onwards
2 BHK Walls	27 Rolls	₹ 59,500 onwards
3 BHK Walls	37 Rolls	₹ 79,500 onwards

Cost includes installation and taxes

Marshalls Wallcoverings are made to last long, really really long. In fact, you could say they defy aging. These stunning wallcoverings come in myriad colours and designs. They are washable, fire retardant, hygienic and eco-friendly. What's more, they'll make your home looking resplendent for years to come. So, give your walls the Marshalls beauty wrap, and get a beautiful home that never ages.

DURABILITY 10+ YEARS | FREE DESIGN CONSULTATION | PRICE RANGE 30 - 300+

Also Available : Vinyl Floorings • Laminate Wooden Floorings • Furnishings • Furniture

Call **92092 56565**

www.marshallsindia.com

marshalls
India's No.1 Wallcoverings

Worli | Prabhadevi | Babulnath | Mahim | Bandra | Vile Parle | Andheri | Powai | Borivali | Ghatkopar | Ghodbunder | Navi Mumbai | Pune | Vapi

conditions apply

water

Jaquar

LIGHTING

INSPIRED BY THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS.



COMPLETE LED LIGHTING SOLUTIONS FROM INDIA'S MOST TRUSTED BATH BRAND*
DECORATIVE | COMMERCIAL | OUTDOOR | HOME

*Jaquar Syndicated Research: Neilsen'13, Percept'16

For more information, visit any of our 21 Orientation Centres

ORIENTATION CENTRES: AHMEDABAD | BANGALORE | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | CHANDIGARH | CHENNAI | COCHIN | GUWAHATI | HYDERABAD
JAIPUR | JAMMU | KOLKATA | LUCKNOW | LUDHIANA | MUMBAI | NAGPUR | NEW DELHI | PUNE | RAIPUR | SILIGURI | SURAT

For enquiries, Call : 18002126808 (Toll Free), E-mail: ccare.lighting@jaquar.com



CRESCENT 14415A

Deepika Padukone

I am Deepika. I am light.

► Some Interesting Performances

MOST KNOW and appreciate IMDb for being the world's most popular and authoritative source for movie, TV and celebrity content with a combined web and mobile audience of more than 250 million unique monthly visitors. They recently announced the Top Ten Indian Movies of 2018 as per customer ratings and the results said a lot the changes that have been taking place on our film world. While *Andhadhun* was ranked first in the list, the rest of movies were as follows: *Ratsasan* (Tamil), *96* (Tamil), *Mahanati* (Telugu), *Badhaai Ho* (Hindi), *Padman* (Hindi), *Rangasthalam* (Telugu), *Stree* (Hindi), *Raazi* (Hindi) and *Sanju* (Hindi).

Col Needham, IMDb Founder and CEO, revealed, "I am thrilled to announce and celebrate the 10 incredible Indian movies that resonated most strongly with our customers in 2018 during my first-ever visit to India. It was fun to follow the surge of audience interest and adoration for year-end releases like *Andhadhun*, *Ratsasan*, *96* and *Badhaai Ho*. I'm also delighted to see Tamil movies, *Ratsasan* and *96*, and Telugu titles, *Mahanati* and *Rangasthalam*, appearing on our Top Ten list this year, revealing that IMDb customers worldwide

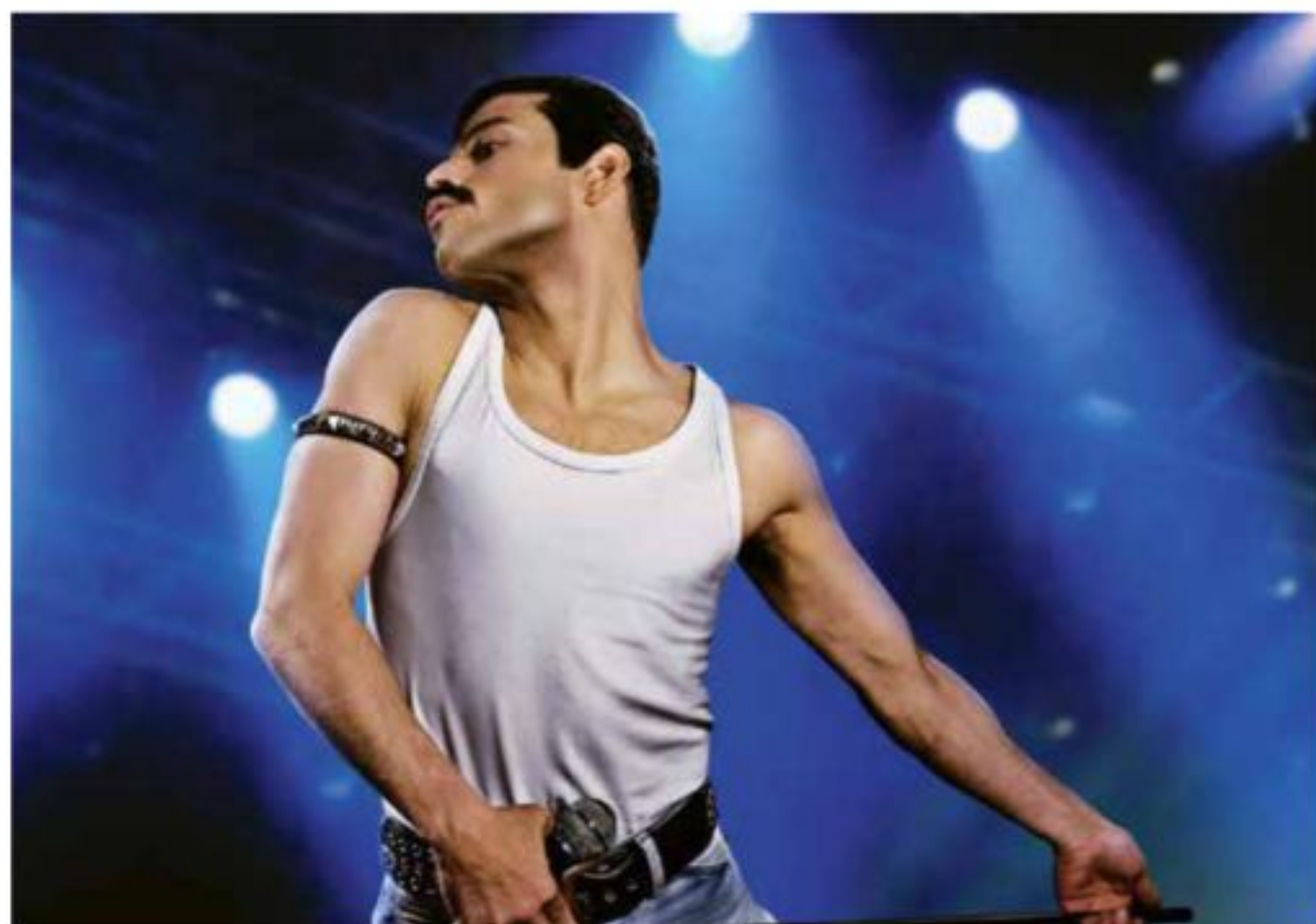
are embracing diverse titles across India in a variety of Indian languages."

Interestingly, two of these releases had Ayushmann Khurana in the lead (*Andhadhun* and *Badhaai Ho*) and *Stree* starred Rajkumar Rao. Two movies were biopics on big names in the film industry: *Mahanati* on Telugu actress Savitri and *Sanju* on actor Sanjay Dutt. *Padman* was a biopic of a common man taking extraordinary efforts for women health. *Raazi* was another real-life tale of a woman who played an important role in the 1971 Indo-Pak war. All in all, 2018 was the year when good stories got their due while big starrers were shown the door.

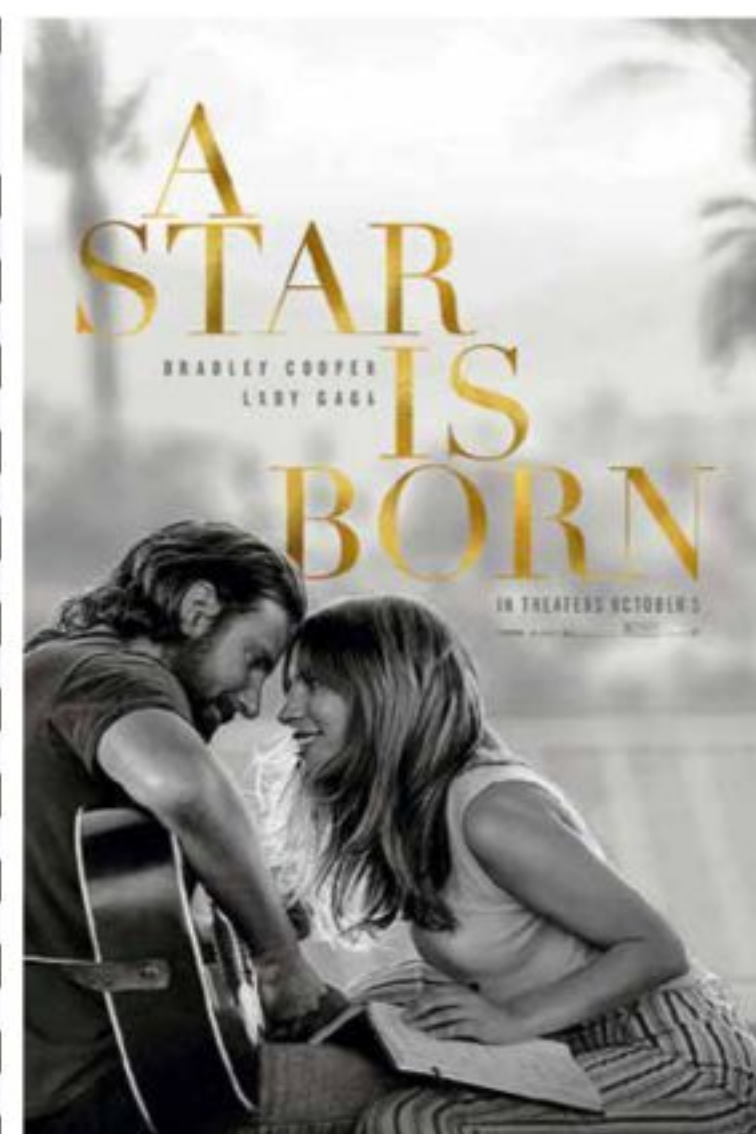
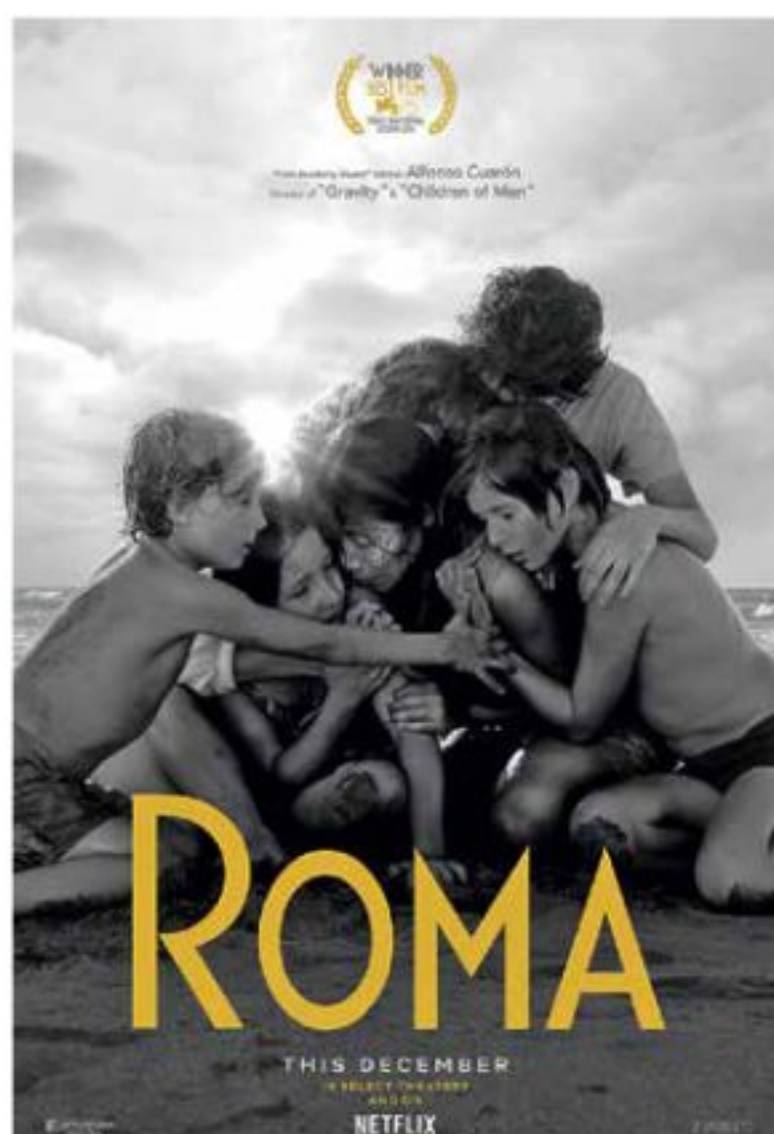


► On a Oscar Note

WHILE THE Oscars 2019 will be held soon, the prediction game has already begun. One of the biggest names in the running is of Rami Malek for Best Actor in the Queen biopic *Bohemian Rhapsody*. His portrayal of lead singer



Freddie Mercury got huge accolades. The movie too was one of the biggest hits of last year and is touted to be in the race for Best Movie section.



There are few other technical nominations in their kitty too. Another biggie is actor Bradley Cooper's directorial debut *A Star is Born* which saw him pair with singer Lady Gaga. While the lead pair have the possibility of leading the nomination in the acting department, there are quite a few technical department nomination here too. *The Favourite* has Olivia Colman along with Rachel Weisz and Emma Stone in the hopefuls' list, along with the director.

In the Best Actor category, names like John David Washington (*BlacKklansman*), and Christian Bale (*Vice*) are being taken seriously. The superhero movies is led by 2018 biggest hits *Black Panther* that will be surely leading the nominations in the technical department including music. It will be followed by *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Ant-Man and the Wasp*. For the Best Director section, names that are thrown up are Spike Lee for *BlacKklansman*, Alfonso Cuarón (*Roma*), Peter Farrelly (*Green Book*), Adam McKay (*Vice*) and Damien Chazelle (*First Man*).

The Foreign Movie section favourites are Alfonso Cuarón directed *Roma* (Mexico), *Capharnaum* (Lebanon), *Shoplifters* (Japan), *The Guilty* (Denmark), *Cold War* (Poland), *Never Look Away* (Germany) and *Burning* (South Korea). Few other favourites are *BlacKklansman*, *Crazy Rich Asians*, *Green Book*, *Vice*, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, *A Quiet Place* and *Eighth Grade*. Now we have to just wait and watch.

► POSH Talk

WITH THE #MeToo movement still doing the rounds of discussion tables, it is vital that you have those in important places come together to discuss how to make things safer and better for not just women but also men. In this light, it was quite heartening to see noted advocate and former civil servant Abha Singh host a roundtable discussion on how to make Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, 2013 more effective in the corporate world. She recently visited Columbia University where she spoke on #MeToo and beyond: making women safe at the workplace.

This discussion in Mumbai had prominent women from corporates come to speak on harassment at workplace. Names like Kalpana Ajayan, Sohini Prasad and Divya Dayal from the corporate world, actress Madhoo Shah and Frederic Simon, Director of Alliance Francaise were seen here. The point of discussion was the implementation of the POSH, apart from dealing with other problems around the act.

A very vital aspect was disclosed that of Section 26 of the Act in which companies need to pay a fine of Rs. 50,000 for non-compliance. And large profitable corporates sadly prefer to pay fines. Also Section 27 makes the crime non-cognisable, thus making the law and

police ineffectual. Thus the discussion was needed to not just get corporates promise to stand on equality with regards the NGO Rann Samar's #hervoicematters campaign and also make sure corporates have a POSH audit to keep #MeToo cases in check.

Budding lawyer Isha Singh spoke that today's youth will not be silenced anymore and they will put their faith in law hoping that the legal system

upholds this faith. An interesting side was shared by Kalpana, who headed the POSH committee in her company, who added that false cases problems still exist with over 12-15% of such cases filed being false. In such scenario, women should be punished as well.

Advocate Aditya Pratap closed the discussion by stressing on the need for thorough training and understanding required on the part of members of the Internal Complaints Committees. There is a need to look into carefully each case with a judicial mind and also levy criminal penalties upon the concerned company's directors and officers-in-charge for violating POSH and amend the law to that effect. The discussion was well-organised by Shweta Mandhana and Kavita Gupta of Threading Lives and the Rann Samar Foundation.



► Jewel of the Matter

AN OBSERVED perception states that jewelry businesses are mostly related to family businesses.

At times the individual might be interested in something else but due to the persuasion of the family he or she joins the bandwagon. Though there are a lot of such cases, Neelam Kothari does not fall in the category. In her yesteryears we have seen her as a cheerful host and actress till she took the shift to a completely different field, jewelry designing. "Yes of course it was completely different but very frankly I enjoy what I am doing now more which is jewelry designing. It was difficult but having said that my family business is actually a



four generations of Jewellers so I eventually knew that after acting this is something I would do. The transition was difficult but eventually I enjoyed it," elaborated Neelam.

Neelam also has longstanding collaborations with other jewelry designers such as Atul Jewellers. "My association with Atul Jewellers has been for many years, as we both have similar sensibilities. We felt it was a good idea to explore ways to collaborate in same way. So far our association has had a great response and looking to continuing our association for a long time." With a promise of ensuring one the perfect piece of jewelry, every piece of Neelam jewels can be said to be unique.

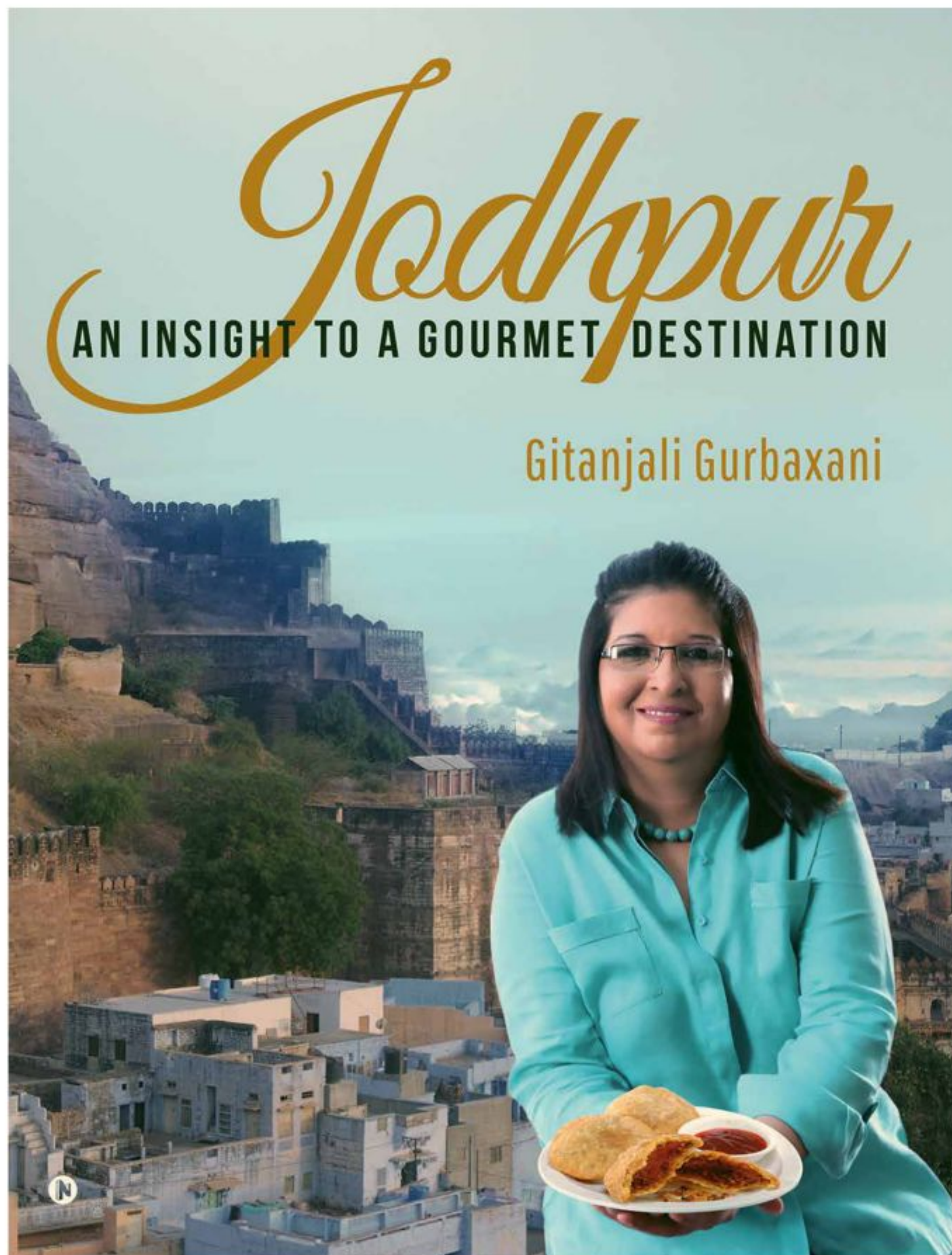
► A True Gourmand

GITANJALI GURBAXANI is a lucky woman, indeed! What can be a better treat to get a chance to enter the celebrated kitchens of the royal family of Jodhpur and learn the intricacies of what makes the food coming out of the a cut above the rest? For a self-confessed foodie, a food consultant and stylist, this must have definitely been a dream come true. Gitanjali made the visit even more fruitful by compiling some of the coveted dishes on the royal menu into a lip-smacking coffee table book.

Titled *Jodhpur: An Insight to a Gourmet Destination*, the book has a collection of recipes of food made by the chefs of the royal family. With a foreword from the Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur himself, who calls the book a 'collection of the rich culinary heritage of Marwar, Jodhpur, which has evolved over centuries in

our arid climatic conditions', he adds that it takes one on a gastronomic journey of traditional Jodhpur delicacies. The book is a beautiful result of Gitanjali's extensive travels in Jodhpur and her interactions with the experts in the various palaces in the city. There are also recipes of some popular street foods available in the royal city.

Apart from a brief history of Rajasthani cuisine, and stories about the palaces with some breathtaking pictures, she offers both vegetarian and non-vegetarian recipes of some famous Jodhpur dishes down to the last measure. Some of these include *Chakki Ka Saag*, *Jungli Maas*, *Fish Jali Kebab*, *Papd Ki Subzi*, *Gatte Ki Subzi*, *Mirchwada*, *Mawa Ke Kachori* and *Rabri Laddoo*, among many more. The book is certainly a gourmand's delight!



► A Supernational Victory

AFTER DEFEAT all these years, India won the title of Mr Supranational for the first time, all due to the efforts of Prathamesh Maulinger. Like any beauty pageant competition, the rounds included a dance face off where 20 participants including our Mr India participated. It was followed by a jazz dance and a challenging question and answer round. "The finale day was one good experience I love to remember. It was show time and everyone was so pumped up. It was pretty shocking. I was praying to the lord that it has been a long way and I have worked for a year to get this home. It was unbelievable when I heard my name being called up like that. I still can't believe it," explained Prathamesh still sounding astonished and excited about the win.

But a lot of these winners tend to be known only for that particular victory or event. Prathamesh is currently known in India because he bagged the title of Mr Supernational. One might wonder if the young winner wishes to be known by the masses in some other manner. "I just want people to know me for the person I am. I have always been fun loving and full of energy. So I just want people to know me for the way I am. And not because I am Mr India or Mr Supranational. Of course it is good to be known as someone. But I just want to be myself," elaborates Prathamesh. As simple as a person he might be, getting known as oneself in the industry rather than talent is indeed very difficult.



► Going Baby Blue



WHEN SHE announced her second pregnancy, most of Carrie Underwood's fans were more than happy. She made this announcement on August 8 last year via her Instagram account. She already has a son Isaiah with husband Mike Fischer.

But we were more amused with the fact that the colour of her attires created a wrong presumption amongst her fan. For quite a few months following the revelation, Carrie was seen in a plethora of pink shaded clothes which led to fans to believe that she was expecting a girl. But she made an announcement while co-hosting the 2018 Country Music Association Awards on November 14. She stated that she was expecting another boy with the following quote – I'm still trying to get myself into the duet category.

These happy times come after a scary moment as last year she had a fall just outside her home which got her 4-5- stitches on her face. She had also spoken about her three miscarriages before becoming pregnant with her second child. She also has another good offering to her fans in the form of her sixth album titled *Cry Pretty*. With her family in good mode and professional success in her kitty, 2018 couldn't have got better for Carrie Underwood.

► Unnecessary Battle

BATTLE TO power is always a crucial one especially on the popular platform of YouTube. Till date Swedish YouTuber PewDiePie was ranked number one with a subscriber count of 66.6 million followed by T-Series, the Indian music label with 64.2 million. Insecure by the competition PewDiePie or Felix uploaded a rap song against T-Series. One of the wordings of the lyrics stated "Your language sounds like it comes from a mumble rap community." It is highly unnecessary to bring India to a negative limelight just because his rank as number one is being threatened.

Triggered by the competition created unnecessarily by Felix, his fan base started posting advertisements urging people to support their favorite. They even started uploading hate comments against India. This was bound to happen after the petty one sided battle he was pulling up against India as a whole.

When the topic arose Neeraj Kalyan, President, T-Series, simply stated, "T-Series is a well-respected platform for Indian music and promoting new talent is part of our DNA. We will continue to build and grow our fan base globally. No amount of spamming will be able to hold back the power of



good music. PewDiePie is indeed a good channel and there is no competition between T-Series and PewDiePie as both have different sets of audiences. I wish all the very best to PewDiePie."

Felix later took notice of the hate comments that rose after his upload of the rap song. He urged to stop and donated for a cause which helps children of India. This is indeed very contradictory. If he really wishes India good, why are you creating such a mess *Broski*?

► Not a Bad Award

IT IS always good to know that your alma mater appreciates your success and felicitates you for the same. Actor Gulshan Grover is always called the Bad Man for his excellent portrayal of villainous characters. And the proof of his success in his career has come in the form of a felicitation he received at the alumni meet of his prestigious alma mater Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) on January 4, 2019 at Taj Palace Hotel in Delhi. The moment was both nostalgic and filled with honour for the actor.

When asked about it, he felt very proud while mentioning the fact that he has done his graduation and post-graduation from here. Some of his batchmates, seniors and juniors included Justice Arjun Sekri, Justice Rohinton Nariman, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley (Senior), Sunil Sethi, Rajat Sharma and many more.

Grover mentioned the fact that though many distinguished themselves in different fields, no one excelled in the field of arts. “Not just Bollywood, I have gone to Hollywood and created a path between the two industries.” This makes the honour even more special. He fondly spoke of how institutions have a great influence on how one shapes up. But it is only in the final year



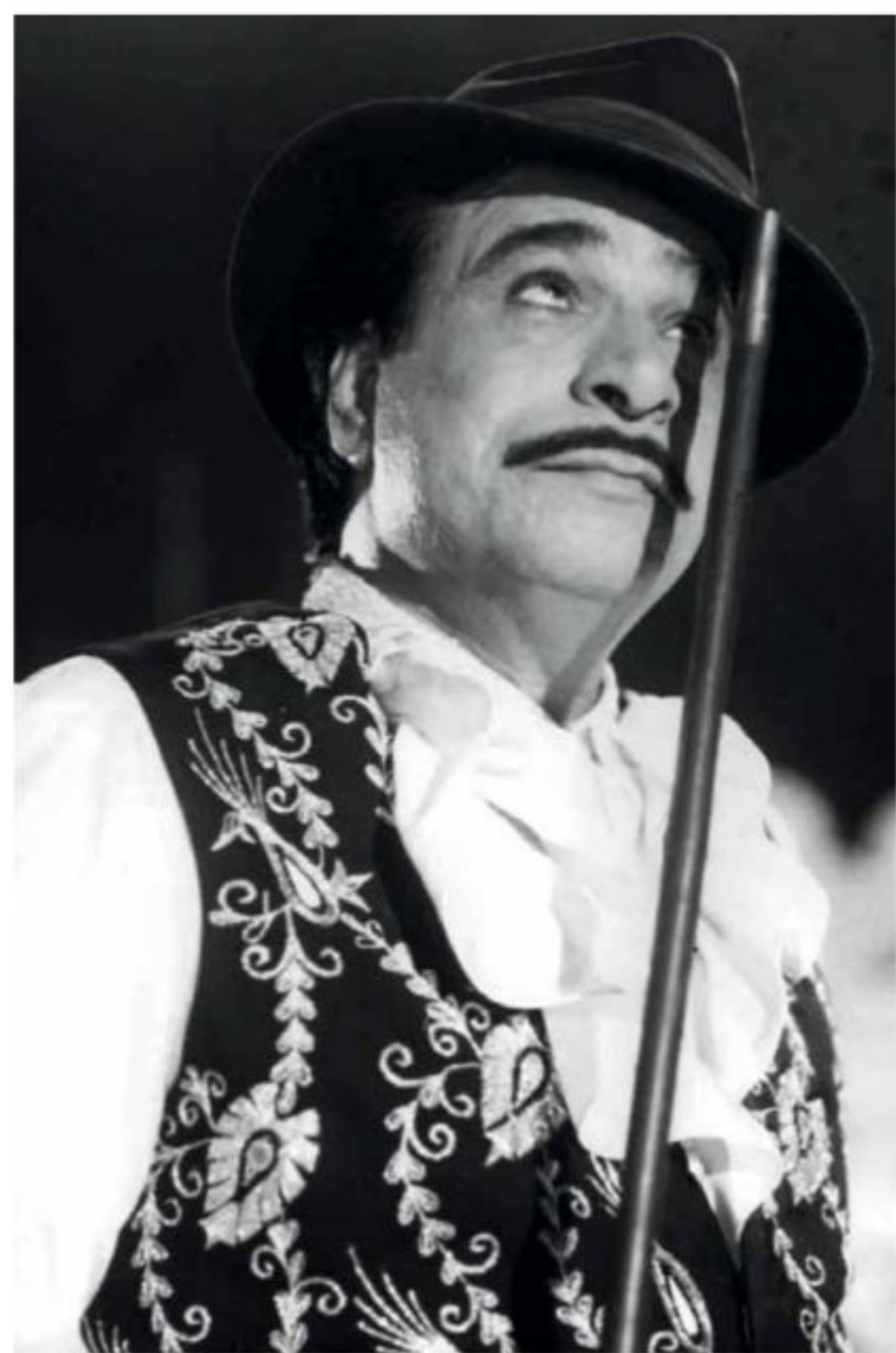
Justice Rohinton F Nariman, Justice Arjun Sekri (classmate), Gulshan Grover, Chairman of college Ajay S Shriram and Principal Prof Simrit Kaur

when you are passing out that you think about career. That is the time when the person you become gets shaped. He took the decision to go against the flow and come to Mumbai to pursue a career in acting. Despite a tough family background and pressure to do something else, he chose this profession.

He remembers the college being very much into academics and not arts. He became the president of the fine arts section which had drama, debates and such other sections. It was a learning experience for him as he would convince people to take part in various activities. He would send Rajat Sharma for debate competition and the college won prizes. Jaitley who was Grover's senior, is fondly remembered to be a dynamic student and leader back then. Sunil Sethi acted as his son in a play. Memories like these can be valuable always. Congratulations to the eternal good bad man of Bollywood.

► Sad Demise

THE DEATH of veteran actor and writer Kader Khan last year on December 31st came as a slight shocker to many in the industry and his fans. Though news of his ill-health was floating around, his death was still sudden to all. He was 81 at the time of his death and died due to suffering from a degenerative disease called supranuclear palsy. He had shifted to Canada a few years back and in fact got Canadian citizenship. His funeral took place in Toronto.



Not many know that he was a professor of Civil Engineering at MH Saboo Siddik College of Engineering in Mumbai and he started his career in Bollywood as a writer (dialogue) when he co-wrote the script of *Jawani Diwani* with Narinder Bedi in 1972. From then on, his career as a scriptwriter and dialogue writer included films like *Roti*, *Dharam Veer*, *Ganga Jamuna Saraswati*, *Coolie*, *Desh Premee*,

Suhaag, *Parvarish*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Sharabi*, *Lawaris*, *Muqaddar Ka Sikander*, *Himmatwala*, *Jaani Dost*, *Justice Chowdhury*, *Tohfa*, *Mr Natwarlal*, *Khoon Pasina*, *Satte Pe Satta*, *Hum*, *Agneepath*, *Coolie No 1*, *Main Anari Tu Khiladi*, *Saajan Chale Sasural*, *Hero Hindustani*, *Aunty No 1*, *Khoon Bhari Mang* and *Khudgarz*. He was the rare one to work for both Manmohan Desai and Prakash Mehra. In the 80s, he became a favourite with a lot of South filmmakers who remade their films in Hindi. As an actor, he was more known for his comic roles, though he did serious roles especially those of villains. His paring with Shakti Kapoor and Govinda was popular especially in David Dhawan movies.

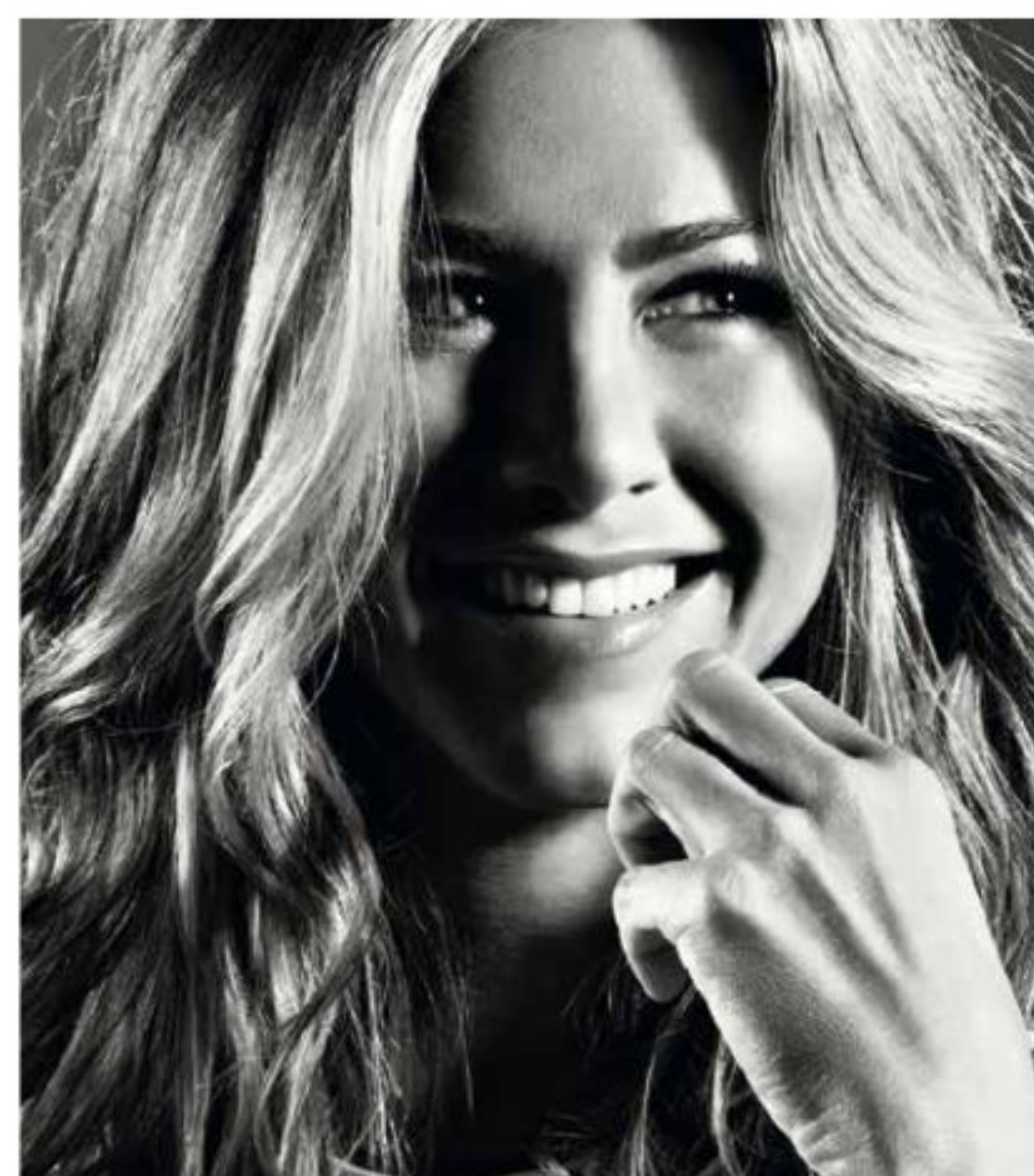
Sadly, in his last days, he was forgotten by the very industry which profited from his genius. While many who had worked with him closely spoke about his sad demise, his family especially his sons asked the very same people of where they were when he was not in good health and was not able to given anything back to the industry. In fact, the family felt saddened by the fact that many did not even call him during his ill-health. All one can say is that genius like Kader Khan do not come into this world often.

► Insensitive Hollywood

THE CONCEPT of media sexism is not a foreign one in Hollywood. Women are almost always questioned upon their life decisions even if they sway even a little from what they are expected to fit to. One must be surprised that however forward Hollywood may be, still people raises eyebrows against women over some choices. For instance people made various assumptions saying the reason Jennifer Aniston is not having a baby is because she is



selfish. "It's pretty crazy. The misconceptions are 'Jen can't keep a man' and 'Jen refuses to have a baby because she's



selfish and committed to her career'. Or that I'm sad and heartbroken. With all due respect, I'm not heartbroken. And second, those are reckless assumptions. No one knows what's going on behind closed doors. No one considers how sensitive that might be for my partner and me. They don't know what I've been through medically or emotionally. Maybe my purpose on this planet isn't to procreate. Maybe I have other things I'm supposed to do?" said the agitated *Friends* actress.

Not just that there was also a problem of actresses not being paid to the level an actor was and certain role injustices as well. Salma Hayek, actress and activist spoke up regarding it saying, "We're not the women who just want to see the movie about how our prince is going to come and rescue us anymore. These romantic comedies are not working. This is the true heart of equality." Though the working atmosphere has improved, still a lot has to be done for actresses to thrive in a better environment.

► Refreshing Newcomer

WHILE MANY try to be prim and proper once they enter the film industry, newcomer and blue-blood in every sense Sara Ali Khan comes out as a refreshing person in the interviews she has given so far. She has never stopped speaking about her unusual family relations and growing up in a rather dysfunctional family, what comes out most is her honest talk about her weight issues while growing up and dealing with them in her way. Her acting skills are also the talk of the town.

If you check her pre-launch early photos and the rather sexy photos you see now, the drastic change is for all to notice. Being the daughter of actor and nawab Saif Ali Khan, she was constantly in the news via stories and photos. While studying abroad at Columbia University, she started dealing with weight issues on a bigger level. She spoke of being overweight and having to deal with PCOD (Polycystic Ovary Disorder) that most know is the main concern if you are trying losing weight.

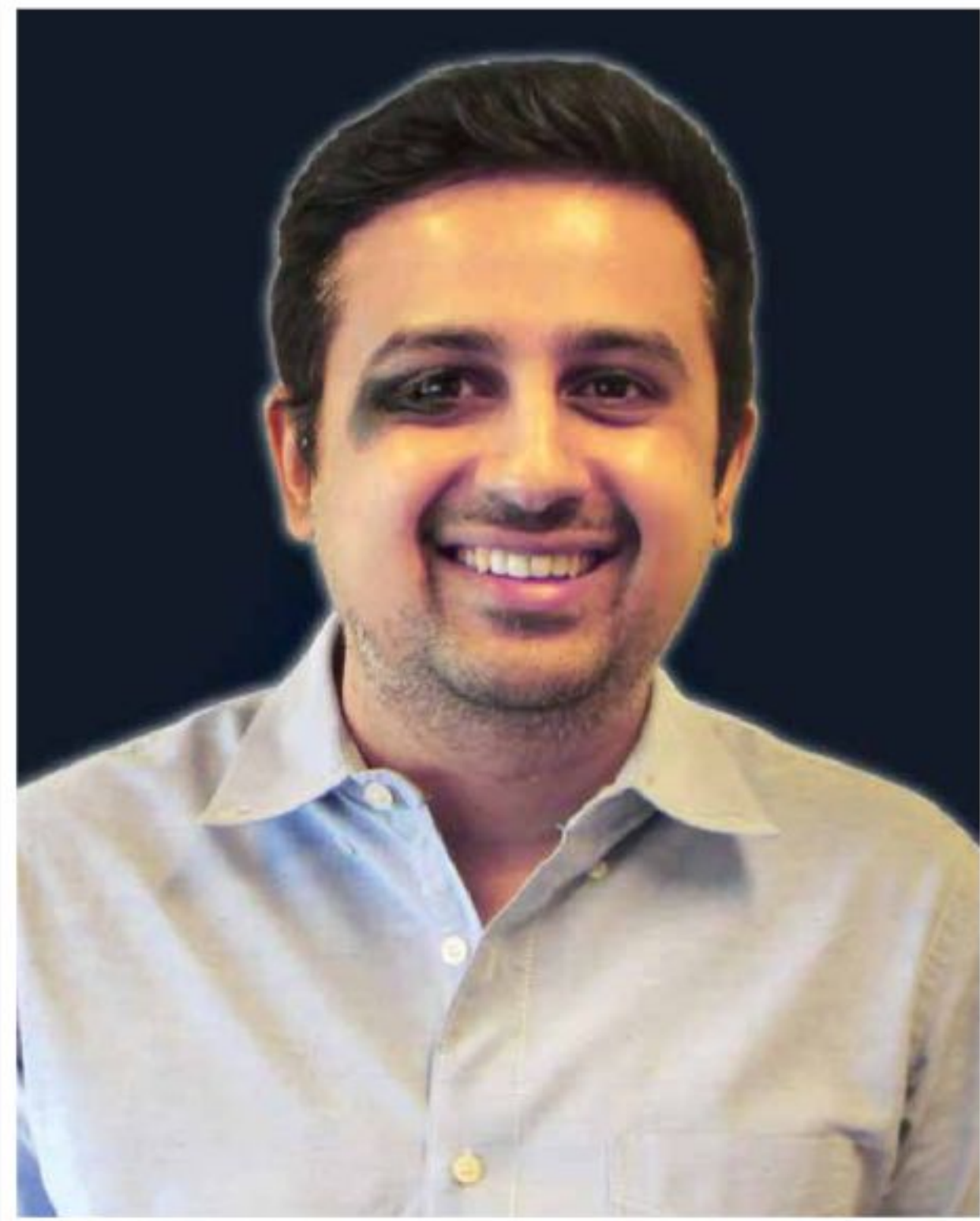
But her ambition to become an actor and a star made her not lose confidence and she worked towards losing the weight, come what may. The turning point came when her mother did not recognise her at the airport. This made Sara feel low and she vowed to only video call her mother after losing the weight. This included completing her graduation early so as to concentrate on her goals. The fact that she was 96 kgs and disciplined herself to get rid of that extra baggage is for all to see. But she was sure of not going for size zero. Today she is not just an inspiration for all those trying to lose weight but the kind of film choices (and her methods to get them) have got her applause from all over.



► Comic Con Mumbai

THE COMIC con Mumbai is back and this time it welcomed the super fans with high-fives. This time NESCO hosted another grand edition of the event which saw biggest of the brands and entertainment house mingling with the super enthusiastic fans. Doritos greeted us first with their virtual dance booth followed by Maruti Suzuki arena zone which had some real life action games. The stalls commenced right from the entrance and added immensely to the fan madness with exciting collectibles like wobble-heads, toys, merchandise, accessories and paintings.

Cosplay arena had some really amazing games being played by expert cosplayers which in turn was attracting a lot of fans to stand and watch the games. In the crowd there were fans who dressed up as their favourite characters, some recognizable like Jon Snow and Joker and some unknown



but catchy. On one side, Amazon Prime Video's zone had fans lining up in long queues to play the interactive games. Also it wasn't just western studios that dominated the fest but a lot of home grown stalls and even a comic on Dara Singh was launched which created quite a stir among the crowds. Comedian Sahil Shah from East India Comedy kept the floor rolling with his top notch humour at the arena stage



which had some of the most popular celebrities, artists and speaker from various industries giving insights into their work to the super fans.

Next to the Arena stage was another biggie of entertainment world – Marvel Studios which had photo booth with the most lethal weapon like Thor's Hammer, Thanos' Infinity Gauntlet, Captain America's Shield and even a real size model of Captain Marvel's plane. There were so many things that it was difficult to figure out what attracts the most crowds to this comic con. "It's a mix of everything, I think the fact that you can do your geeky

shopping, meet leading international and Indian creators, check out amazing performances and Cosplay, plus all the fan experience zones, all of it at one place drives the crowd to the shows," says Jatin Varma, Founder, Comic Con India. He adds quickly, "We have expanded via our partners the various fan experiences and engagements at the show, plus a great line up of guests and performances."

Though every comic con should ideally become the best of its country but the comparison with west is bound to happen given the fascination of most Indian fans with the shows and movies from West. Jatin takes a moment and says, "I'll be honest, we are not looking to match up to them. We are looking to create our own unique identity and get more diverse content in to the show as well. Having said that, something that I am pushing



towards, is getting studios to do more for the Indian fans and get them access to content and talent, which happens very often internationally."

We hope Jatin's vision of the Comic Con India keep growing and we witness that magic every passing year. Eagerly waiting for the next edition...

Sleep Well

Making her debut on silver screen with *Luv Shuv Tey Chicken Khurana*, the bold and beautiful **Anangsha Biswas** came into limelight with her role in an Amazon Prime web Series *Mirzapur* and now would be seen in Arshad Warsi starrer *Fraud Saiyyan*. Revealing her sleep routine to us she says...

Before going to bed I get into reading and then meditate for 15 minutes. Sleep is very important to me, like most of you might know that this is when our body recuperates which is essential for a healthy body as well as mind. I'd say six to eight hours of sleep is a must.

I prefer taking proper sleep than power naps as the latter makes me groggy. A medium hard mattress is good for the back. I believe in keeping my mind body positive and relaxed while letting go of all the chores of the day. **S**

DISCLAIMER: The above opinion of the featured celebrity is voluntary. Neither 'SOCIETY' nor 'SLEEPWELL' is connected with the opinion.



Sleepwell
My Mattress
Crescent Supportec

Choose a mattress that is right for you.

Choose Crescent Supportec, a support mattress with a Luxurious Box Top finish and Unique Zero Turn™ Technology that is right for you. Our new My Mattress range offers you a choice of surface feels in a series at the same price.

Crescent is available as Firmtec, Supportec & Softec



Wimbledon Singles Champions together at the Centre Court to celebrate Wimbledon's 125th year

The Insiders of Grand Slam

Tennis itself is an exhilarating sport. It becomes more interesting with an expert's subtle observations. *Society* interviews Atul Premnarayan over the tennis minute details and the world of Grand Slams.

| By **VANI KRISHNAN** |

Sports can be ranked in increasing order according to an individual's favourites. But one that grabs instant attention is the Tennis Grand Slams. While we enjoy listening and witnessing them from India, we forget that this is because of journalists reporting day and night from the respective field. To be able to report correctly in an appealing manner to the audience is no child's play. Atul Premnarayan is one such media professional. He was the only Asian to have covered a total of 80 Grand Slam.

Atul's uncompromising love for sports comes from him playing tennis at every level. He also has commentated and broadcasted along with his playing moments. His Grand Slam reporting began soon after the 1980 Wimbledon Men's Finals. "I did several national and international televisions and radio sports assignments. I always relished broadcasting live sporting action which was the real challenge. I was confidently ready to be a Grand Slam broadcaster and reporter within a year."

Fortunately several media agencies wanted live coverage and he went live for them from the four venues along with giving

daily updates. He did assignments for BBC Hindi and Urdu Service in London for more than 25 years. Back then the All India Radio Grand Slam Voicecast had a 7.30 AM fixed slot for 15 minutes daily during Wimbledon and later at the other three Grand Slams. "These had millions of listeners across India for the entire Grand Slam fortnight. The great satisfying challenge was doing 36 live assignments in just a day!"

But 80 is an impressive number of coverage too. The main drive started after witnessing a vital match. The Wimbledon Men's Finals played at 'The Centre Court' in 1980 made him take his decision. "It was in such matches that 15,000 Wimbledon Centre Court fans never left the stand and cheered and roared with an unseen delight. Bjorn Borg was battling in his life's greatest match. He was running like a Golden retriever chasing balls as if there was no tomorrow. John McEnroe was playing with a range of versatility in shot making never seen before at Wimbledon. McEnroe's serves took Bjorn Borg off the court and McEnroe volleyed winners in his masterly flamboyance. Then came the most nostalgic Wimbledon moment. A fourth set tie break,

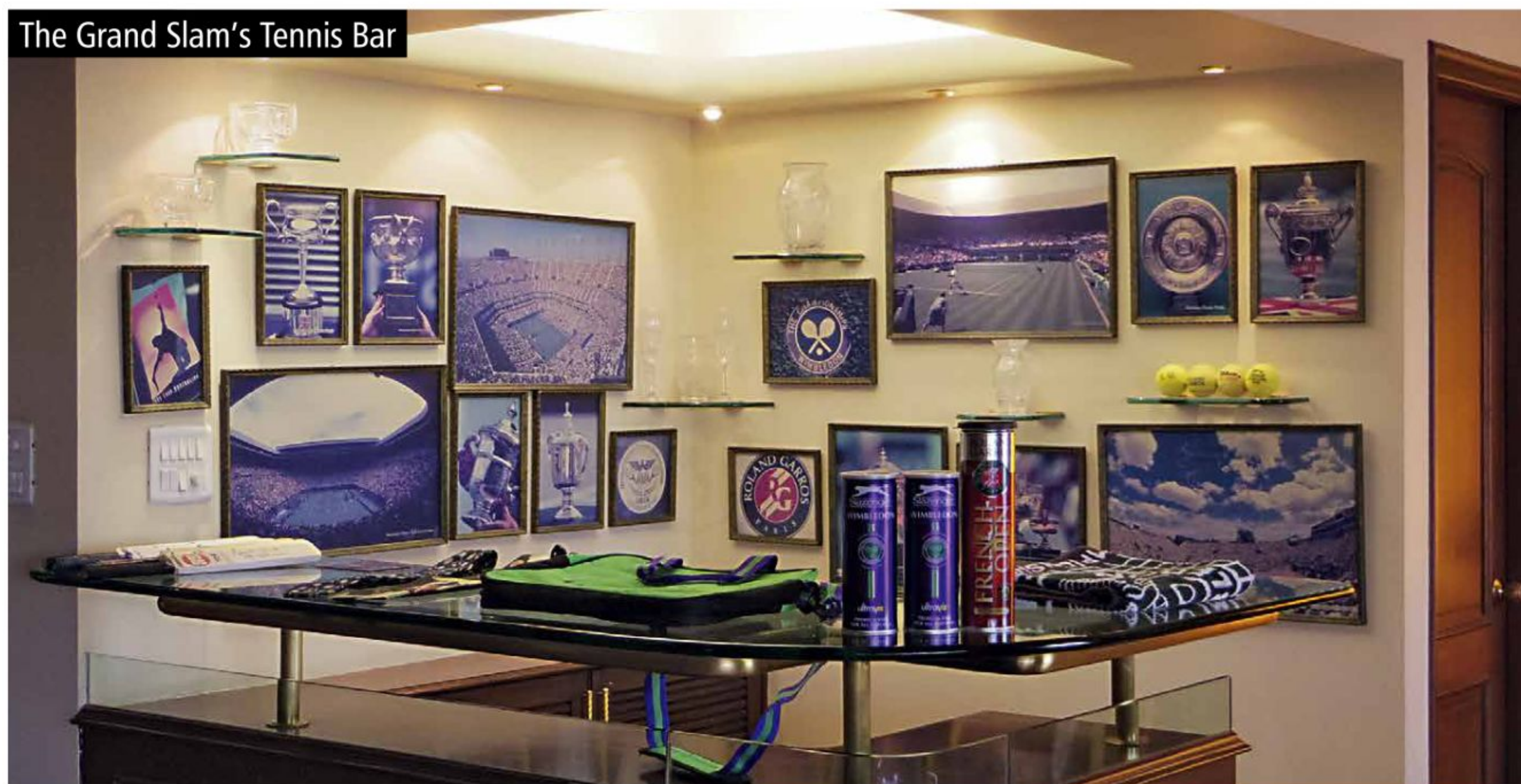
where never ever before was seen such an array of world class shot making and breath taking rallies blew ones breath away. An unmatched pulsating tension gripped the arena and the fans that almost became unbearable. McEnroe won that historic tie break fourth set at 18-16," elaborates Atul.

While indulging himself in such assignments he must have come across a number of big and small normally unseen observations. "John McEnroe was the most popular player at Wimbledon. His talent, stroke play, ball anticipation, serve and his speed on court was magical. But it was McEnroe's personality and aura that was a sight for the fans. In 1981 on Wimbledon's Court 1, the chair umpire overruled a line call. McEnroe was in a rage never seen before at Wimbledon shouting away to the chair umpire 'The chalk clearly flew. You can't be serious to overrule that call'. 9,000 Wimbledon fans erupted with sheer joy. Secondly Borg never ever played a grass court match before Wimbledon. Winning six French Open Titles, he would come straight to London and practise secretly with his coach Lennart Bergelin. Borg's court coverage and



baseline returns were his trump card. Not just that Jimmy Connors was a brilliant two-handed service returner. The harder you served, Connors returned it faster,” explained Atul minutely.

Likewise other than players, there would be minute and intricate details of the four Grand Slam venues that one must have missed. According to Atul, at Wimbledon, the green grass courts and its purple dressings of the arena called the combination across the world as true Wimbledon colours. The Wimbledon Museum takes us to eras one can never think of. In the French Open, clay courts are swiped after every few games are over to ensure the on court chalk lines are clear and visible. Australian Open can be termed as the friendliest Grand Slam. The Yarra River flows by the side of the Melbourne Tennis park arena. It is also the hottest Grand Slam. The heat is so unbearable that the Rod Laver Court is covered and the roof closed and they start the air conditioner. When Boris Becker won in ‘91 and ‘96, he ran and jumped into the Yarra River as the heat was killing him. US Open can be termed to be a Grand slam in which you are on your own. There’s no time to ask anyone for any reference.



Everyone would deem one or the other player to be the greatest post the tournaments. Ask Atul and he replies, “The all-round game, speed in coverage of court, the forehand shots and its lethal power, its angles and deceptions that Roger Federer exhibits time and time again are truly legendary. It is an all-time classic. His anticipation is so good that he reaches the ball a fraction earlier and executes his winning stroke. Winning 20 Grand Slams in the last 18 years and eight Wimbledon Crowns is his achievement. He is also in the golden list of all-time greatest sportsman on and off the sporting arena,” asserted Atul. “Amongst women, Martina Navratilova, Steffi Graff and Serena Williams would be the best in the sporting world. If asked to choose, Steffi Graff would be the best.”

But when it comes to the hard courts at the US Open, the scenario is different. “The best at US Open would be the finals between Pete Sampras vs. Roger Federer. Service is a factor at US Open. Sampras had the best serve in the game. This would be a very close match. He would have a slight edge as it is his home court and being an American the crowds would also back him. But if Roger Federer can produce his all-time display he could win. But still Sampras at the US Open will be a very close No 1 all time.”

Atul stated the 80s era is his favourite Grand Slam era. This was because the all-time greats of the game played in this

era. “The competition both in men and women has been the greatest in this era. It is evident from the names. Borg, McEnroe, Andre Agassi, Jim Courier, Navratilova, Chris Evert, Graff, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Jana Novotna. The list goes on,” explains Atul.

But there are significant differences between the past and the present Grand Slams. In the previous era there was more court craft, touch tennis, no pressure of sponsors, short rallies as they volleyed and more. There was also a soft temperament. Today’s era is about opposite power, hunger, pressure and better fitness. Not just that according to Atul more modern power packed tennis rackets enabling one to play a complete all-round game have been introduced.

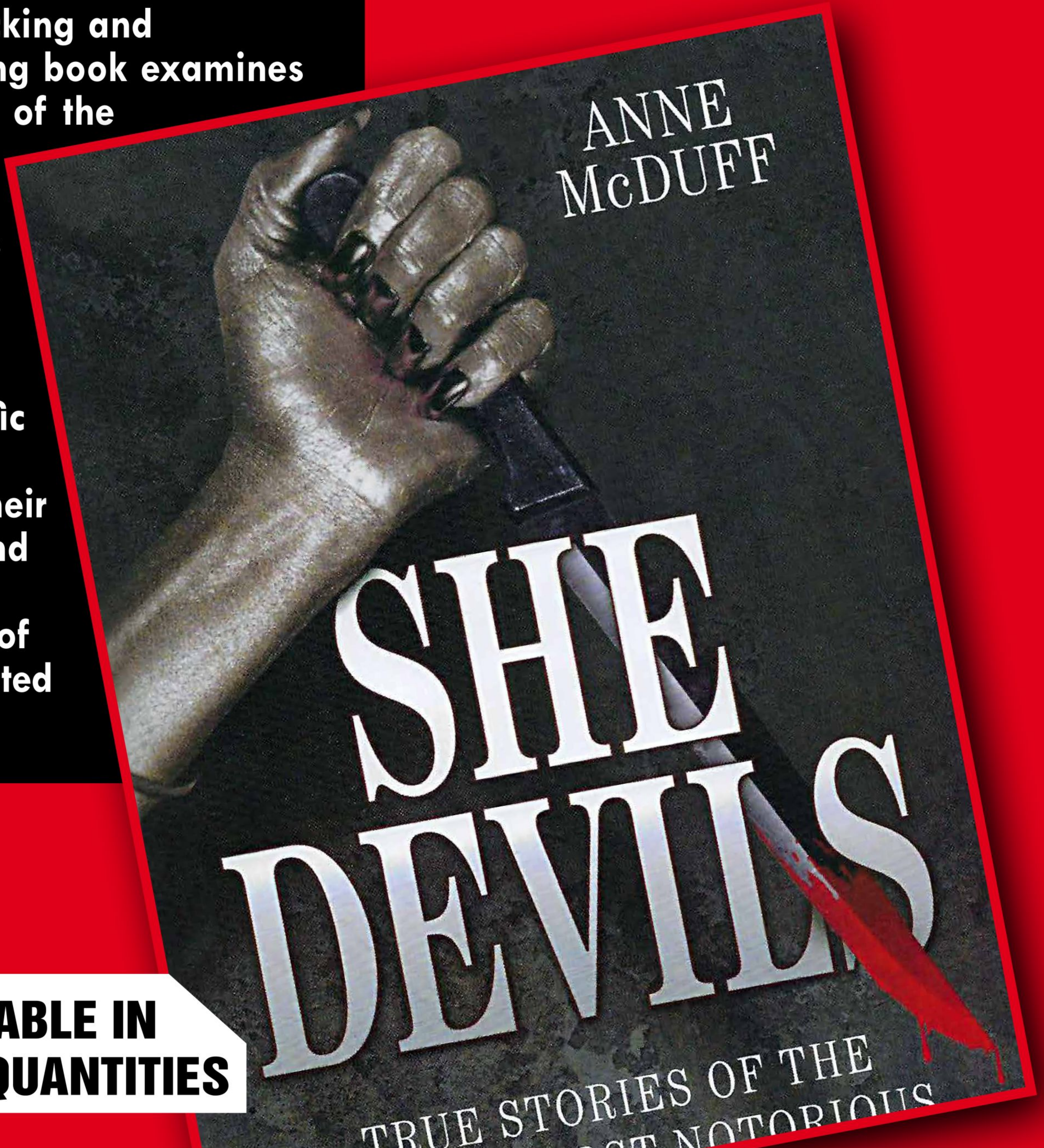
Ask Atul about Grand Slam future and responds, “It is very bright. They are the pulse, heartbeat, soul and the joy of the sporting world. The last 50 years has proven that. Each of the four Grand Slams have completed more than a 100 years. Each year the crowd increases, ticket prices have risen and so has the prize money. Many young talents are emerging but it will take time before they give that same excitement as the above all-time greatest stars have given to the world of Grand Slams.”

Tennis at large is becoming a much more popular sport due to these very set of tournaments. We eagerly to tune in live to the upcoming Grand Slam. **S**

WOMEN WHO KILL FOR PLEASURE.

This shocking and fascinating book examines the cases of the world's most notorious female killers, revealing the horrific stories behind their crimes and the inner working of their twisted minds.

**AVAILABLE IN
LIMITED QUANTITIES**



Available at all leading Book Stores. If unavailable, please send a Demand Draft for ₹285/-, payable to Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., Magna House, 100/E, Old Prabhadevi Road, Prabhadevi, Mumbai - 400 025. Tel. 022-67091234. Please indicate clearly your address and mention title of book. **FREE** postage, packing and handling in India only. Website: www.magnamags.com • E-mail: books@magnamags.com





“Greatness only Comes When You Have A Team That Works With Passion.”

AR Rahman is a name that needs no introduction. *Society* speaks to the man behind the music and the music that made that very man into a legend. We also speak to young author Krishna Trilok who has written *Notes of a Dream*, the authorised biography of the ‘Mozart of Madras’.

| By **CSS LATHA** |

AR Rahman, the architect of the Golden Age of Indian Film Music continues to set newer trends and conquer newer vistas in film art. The man with the Midas touch, also known as ‘Mozart of Madras’, has been captured in all his highs and lows in *Notes of a Dream*, a Biography on the Muse of Music by Krishna Trilok.

Legends and laurels go hand in hand and their biographies often serve the purpose to inspire and act as a beacon of light. There are but a few names on the block synonymous with living legends and the immediate name that rings the bell in the Indian context is that of AR Rahman.

His soulful compositions initiated with *Roja*, spanning through super hits from *Bombay*, *Dil Se*, *Rockstar*, *Swades*, *Taal*, *Jodhaa Akbar* to *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Highway*, *2.0* and *Vande Mataram* have had music lovers swaying for over two and half decades, touching every mood and emotions of their life. His magical creations have made him an integral part of Indian psyche.

During the 90s, Rahman’s art of musical notations surpassed any other global pop culture, even those of Michael Jackson. A new wave of film melodies aired on

television stood in contrast to western popular music.

The depiction of everyday life of contemporary Indian culture and elements got a warm reception as Rahman’s music connected with the native flair of melodies, emanating the fragrance of the soil and creating cross-generational trends of musical scores, amalgamating the Indian and international identities.

Little wonder he stands alone as larger than life on a podium as the first Asian to win the biggest coveted global recognition – Oscars, not one but two of them in the same year and two Grammy Awards, the highest Indian titles of recognition in the country, i.e., the Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, National Awards four times and innumerable films awards and international accolades. Featuring prominently among the cream of the red carpet celebs of the global entertainment business, Rahman’s surreal life from rags to dizzying fame and riches is what fairy tales are made of.

In what triggered as acknowledging the new maverick ‘Kid on the Block’ soon became Rahmania, a wave of mass appeal. Rahman was steeped in creating new sounds in the Indian soundscape – incorporating

classic, folk and western styles, promoting young talent that has made him a huge contributor to the emergence of new sound trends and young artists.

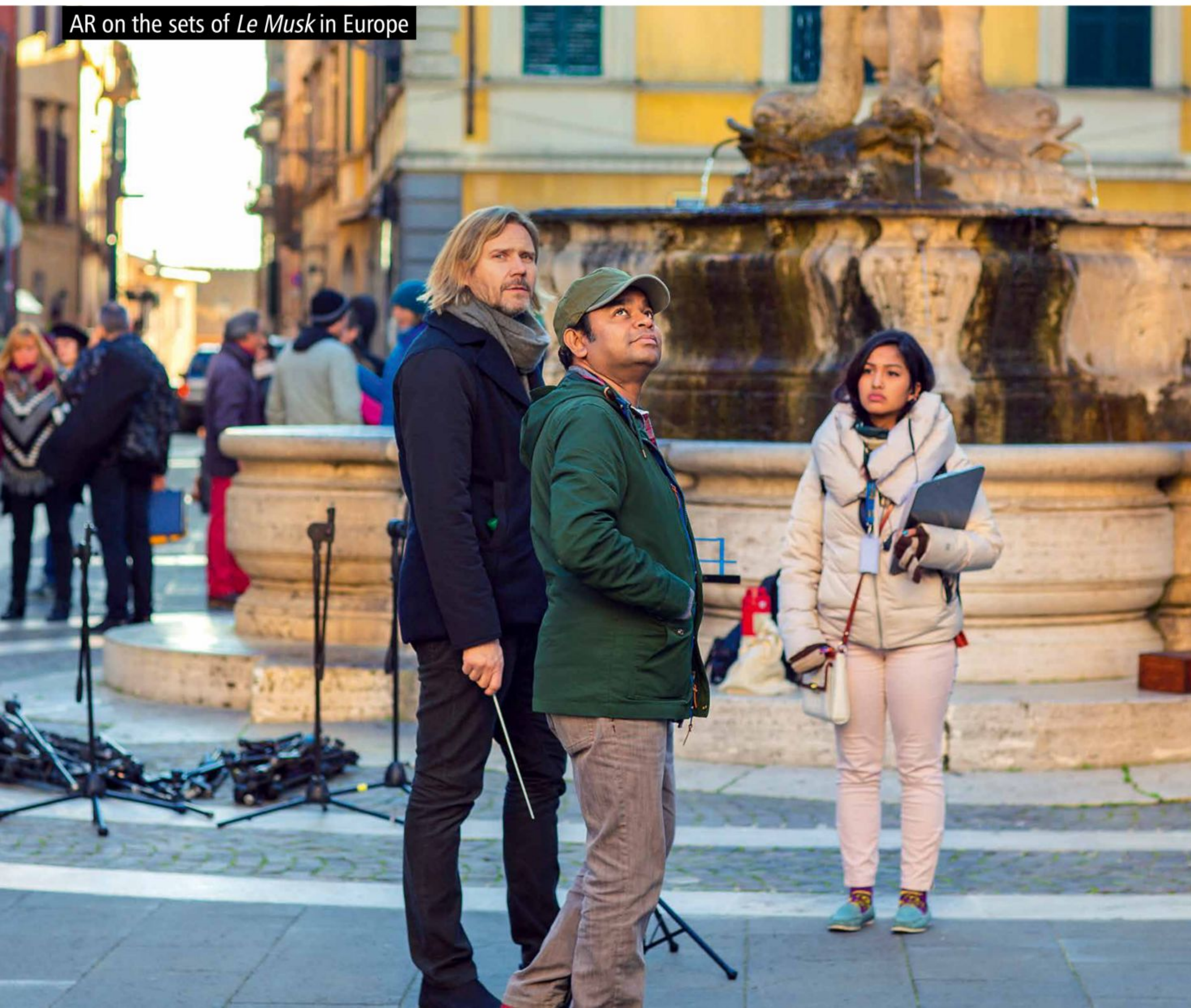
Steered to the centre stage, staying afloat as non-controversial in public life and conducting professional obligations dispassionately is Rahman’s secret to staying humble, balanced and grounded. We deem these attributes as those of a ‘Sufiyana Karma Yogi’. Rahman revels in Allah and also delves in karma philosophy! Probably the rarest of balance of perception at the intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels of existence!

His simplicity while working his way up the global ladder has remained unfazed. How is he as a person? *Notes of a Dream* also deals with this aspect and its young author Krishna Trilok has made an effort to bring out the real persona of Rahman behind his iconic façade.

Excerpts of introduction to Rahman from the book reads: ‘The fact is, for a lot of us, AR Rahman’s music has been the soundtrack that’s defined parts of our lives as much as they’ve defined the hundred-something movies he’s worked on. Anyone who was around in 1992, accustomed to the music of RD Burman or Ilaiyaraaja who came before, will remember sitting up when they first heard the music of Mani Ratnam’s Tamil film *Roja*— AR’s feature-film debut. For a generation of young people who were set on listening to American and British artists, AR Rahman made it a point of pride to listen to Indian music. For anyone who thought Indian creativity couldn’t match the imagination of the West, AR dispelled all doubts and went on to win Oscars and Grammys and collaborated with the likes of Mick Jagger and Andrew Lloyd Webber.’

Rahman made it cool to be patriotic with *Vande Mataram*. He pleaded for peace and justice with the music he wrote for films like *Bombay*. At a time when most musicians and singers stood stiffly on stage and sang, reading lyrics off paper as

AR on the sets of *Le Musk* in Europe



instruments played behind them, Rahman revolutionized live performances with dancers and futuristic stage effects.

He made you smile with songs like *Petta Rap* and *Pappu Can't Dance Saala*. He made you cry with his *Lukka Chuppi*. He made you dance with *Chaiyya Chaiyya* and introspect with *Kun Faya Kun*. He inspired you with *Jai Ho* and sparked compassion with *Pray for Me Brother*.

We know all this and more about his career. What we don't know is the man himself. What are Rahman's thoughts and feelings on things other than music? What is a day in his life like? Who is he when he's with his friends and family? And what does he enjoy? And, above all, where is he headed?

Notes of a Dream has not just asked these questions but dealt with the entire process of the making of AR Rahman and is already ranked the second-best seller of the year, racing its way to the top best seller.

At the completion of 27 years in the industry Rahman is still going strong as the most coveted option for a big-budget filmmaker with elitist cast and crew. Naturally it takes some extraordinary element to be able to get Rahman on board of a film. With much to catch up with, while Rahman turning a writer, producer and director too, I sought his time for a tete-a-tete.

It was in the new block of YM Movies Studio where Rahman opened the door, greeting warmly into a plush room. After an initial exchange of pleasantries, we drifted into conversation about his latest biography, music, films in India and abroad, family and more.

The book has stirred a mood of reminiscence, to look back at the treasure trove of a momentous career, one wonders what a flash back look would like in his own mental eye, of people and events that have made it possible.

"*Roja* of Mani Ratnam and the whole joy ride, different things opening up, *ammi* (mother), father, kids, wife, the conservatory



AR and Nora Arnezeder recording the title song for *Le Musk*

and the people who introduced me to Mani Ratnam, Sharada and Trilok. Of course *Ellam pugazhum Iraivanukke* (All praise to god). Sometimes the very first movie sets the standard, not only for me but for the whole team. I was struggling to cope with the set standards, not just in mine but in people's perspective. Many things opened up to go forward. I know I have upset many people because I had to refuse many movies, like 95% of offers had to be refused because it was very difficult," Rahman very candidly confesses.

Krishna documents interestingly the moments that set rolling the career for Rahman and it goes thus:

Excerpts:

MANI RATNAM

'The first real meeting with AR that Mani Ratnam recalls was at another party, one hosted by Trilok and Sharada to celebrate the success of an advertisement they had done for Leo Coffee, which AR had created a (now iconic) jingle for.

'That was the first time I recall really talking to him and probably the only time I've seen him at a party,' says Mani Ratnam.

'I had heard about him and we chatted for a while. We did broach the subject of working together sometime. His maturity stunned me.'

Rahman told Mani that he wanted him to come to his studio.

'Yeab, I'll come one day,' the director said.

That one day eventually arrived, when Balachander told him to find a new composer. Mani got hold of Trilok Nair and said he wanted to meet 'his friend, the musician'.

So Trilok very happily called AR up and said, 'Hi. I'm bringing Mani over. He wants to see you and listen to your work.'

AR was excited, but nervous. 'Sure,' he said. 'But what do I do when he's here? What do I play for him?'

Trilok suggested he pull out some of the bits of music he had created through the years 'in his free time' and some of his other works, some of his jingles and band music. Together, Trilok and AR decided on a few pieces that could be showcased.

Finally, on the appointed day, Trilok Nair and Mani Ratnam showed up at AR's home studio, Panchathan. Greetings were exchanged and hands were shaken. Then they all sat down and AR played some of

his tunes. They sat there for a long time, listened to what Rahman had to play. (And he had a lot.)

Mani didn't say a word. He did not comment. Didn't say good or bad, nothing. He sat silently, just listening. He only smiled all the while. When AR was done playing all the musical pieces he had lined up, Mani Ratnam stood up, said thank you and walked out of the studio without another word. He took some tapes and disappeared.

Whatever AR had been expecting, it certainly wasn't this. He turned to Trilok, who was still in the studio with him, looking quite confused, and said, 'Eh, enna da? Onnumae sollala.' (What, man? He didn't say anything.) Trilok shrugged...!

AR thought, at the time, that Mani Ratnam hated his music. 'I didn't think he would ever come back,' he says.

But a few days later, the director got in touch with AR and told him that he'd like to sign him on for his next film—as music director. 'I love a lot of stuff,' he said. 'Let's meet and I'll tell you what will work for me.'

It was a decision that would end up altering the course of AR's life, as well as Tamil, Indian and world music and cinema.'

The book recreates the memories from the yore, moment by moment in great detail.

You would seldom find Rahman being critical about anyone or even acknowledge anyone's criticism against him. He genuinely distances himself from talking down about anyone and is just not interested in counting the flaws in others. Rahman does well to be engrossed in his own work.

(Excerpt): 'In an interview with the journalist Arnab Goswami in 2017, he mentioned that is probably why he might seem aloof and distant sometimes. It is, he said, because some part of his mind is always in another place, a place he cannot ever fully lose touch with, since that is where all of his music comes from and he needs to be in contact with it.'

His *Takiya Kalam* (favourite phrase) *Ellam Pugazhum Iraivanukke* has inspired many a youth that spiritual outlook is



AR performing in Hyderabad

not uncool after all! Rahman insists that spiritual guidance and anchoring insulated him from the normal fears and insecurities and he was fitted out to survive the ups and downs, 'turmoil, temptations and pressures of the industry'.

His perception of spirituality also evolved and matured down the lane. "One thing I realised is that spirituality is also a selfish notion because it gives you happiness. But a more complete person is the one who dips in the sea water and comes out wet. Sea water is the life in all its complexity, suffering, joy, success, and failure, all that we go through, nurturing, bringing up children and responsibilities, all that is life. And when you go through the cycle you are a complete person. But if you skip all that and you go there, then you are an incomplete person. That's what I felt and that's what is preached by *paigambers*."

IMTIAZ ALI

This excerpt of Imtiaz Ali, Kashmir and Rahman sort of says the obvious.

'I had always told Rahman sir about Kashmir,' says Imtiaz Ali. 'I used to tell him that he had to come with me if I ever went there.'

AR had never visited the beautiful but troubled region—the setting, as it happened, of *Roja*, the first-ever feature film he composed for. But he promised Imtiaz that he would go with him to Kashmir. 'I never thought he would do it though,' says Imtiaz. 'A lot of people say a lot of things, but one of the things I admire most about Rahman sir is his honesty. Even for formality's sake, he has never spoken a word which is not the truth. The moment someone asks "How are you?" for instance, we all automatically just say "fine". But he'll not do that. He'll actually answer truthfully.'

So when Imtiaz Ali did go to Kashmir, sometime after his conversation with AR, he called up the composer and asked if he would like to join him. 'And he actually came! Kashmir was pretty unsafe at the time, supposedly, but he just came. He didn't even ask me if it was safe. He was advised not to go there, in fact, because it was not a good idea for someone of his popularity to visit Kashmir. Because details of his visit would be posted on social media and everybody would come to know and all that.'

Imtiaz took AR around to many beautiful places around the state and AR in turn took the director to several Sufi shrines in Srinagar. 'We were driving somewhere together, the two of us, at one point,' recalls Imtiaz, 'and he said something that really struck me. He said to me, "I'm lucky because for me spirituality and music have the same point of origin. Both are the same for me. I'm lucky that one thing is not different from the other."' Imtiaz pauses for a moment, and then goes on, 'That's how it is for him. His being is like that. Every note he plays is a prayer. Everything he does in terms of music is a connection with the Almighty. And I have come to realize that all his greatness is rooted in his simplicity and mysticism and honesty.'

Rahman is a deeply spiritual person. The calm and healing aura around him and his work are proof enough of that. But as with anyone who has arrived at true equilibrium, there is nothing complex or ethereal about this aspect of him. It is simple and practical, allows him to live in the best possible way for himself and those around him. Imtiaz sums it up best: 'His spirituality lies in the fact that he's doing and saying things that seem almost silly. He says anything he feels like. We'll sit and talk about really immature things. We laugh. He's very funny, he's constantly trying not to upset anybody and he's always trying to do the right thing.'

Taking strides into unfamiliar terrains, crossing language and cultural barriers and to make a space for himself was indeed a daunting task. "I figured out certain things and missed on some others. But one thing I

stuck on to is my art. I did not consider if it's a big film or small, if I felt that something is important for me, I would do it."

Rahman's native intelligence in gauging career moves worked wonders. Today he stands as a subject of study in varied aspects of art, profession and business. Books have been attempted before on him and even research students study on their thesis based on Rahman's success formula.

Rahman gained recognition as the face of Indian popular music (film music) by mainly incorporating new technology and transforming the Indian soundscape. Scoring music for Ashutosh Gowariker's *Swades* was done out of conviction. "I can't be selfish, pack up and go settle abroad and have a great life. Being with your own people who love your music is one of the reasons I stick here; making a change is also part of this and I am enjoying that change," he explains with a calm smile, so very typical of Rahman.

Biopic wave sweeping the film industry. When quizzed Rahman laughs away the possibility of one on him. "Mine is a very boring tale with no drama or affairs."

But then his is a saga of struggle, message of hope and inspiration. *Notes of a Dream* recorded Rahman's suicidal thoughts in his struggling days. Here a strongest message of hope comes through, that the darkest hour is before dawn that challenge the strength

of courage. But hold on! An effulgent day break is around the corner, this is Rahman's life message. In hind sight, he says, "The only way to break it is to see how useful you are to other people. A sense of existence only comes when you are a part of other's lives. You can have all the money and fame and you sit alone feeling you have seen it all. But I think by giving, you are getting a lot more and that is my life experience."

Rahman's gift of musical talents has seen revolutionary sound transformation, paving way for young musician to experiment with traditional acoustic sounds together with technology. 'Transformation of the Indian Soundscape and its Effects on Music Education' introducing a new genre of fusion, hybrid music has seen impacting the KM Conservatory as well. Rahman possesses the skills to manipulate digital technology and synthesize sounds in ways to produce music that appeals to a global pop music audience; his music is less recognizable as one distinct genre.

Probably the best of creative opportunities sought his participation and each have left an enriching mark on his own creative indulgence. For what seems the end of the road for others, Rahman has always sought and unfolded pathways to newer vistas. And so now he ventures into film making as a writer, director and also a producer.



Performing with Coldplay at the Global Citizen Fest in Mumbai in 2016



“It was an extension I would say and also I was trying to link what was missing. People who value my music and the reason for music is the great theme. And then everything changed. Even in the Hindi film industry music companies have taken over who say, ‘I have five music composer’s songs. I can give you what you choose from’. It is convenient. So very few directors are wanting that passion and commitment and intention to do something great. Greatness only comes when you have a team that works with passion. When you lose that you don’t have patience or respect. It’s a power game, ‘I don’t need you’ attitude. Tomorrow it may happen to heroes also. There may be a day when they computerise the faces and everything becomes a game engine. So, you just remain as a mere brand. But each one has power to decide what the future is going to be. In my opinion the respect and expectations that people have on me can only be fulfilled if I started a company where I could express the stories and music my way. I could be right or wrong but at least its mine.”

Rahman’s production begins with a romantic musical titled *99 Songs* directed by Vishwesh Krishnamoorthy. He will also be making his directorial debut with *Le Musk* which is a Virtual Reality (VR) movie. “*Le Musk* happened as a fun

thing. My wife Saira is a perfume fanatic. To pep talk her I just said, ‘Why not we do a movie on perfume?’ and she got excited and said, ‘Let’s do that!’ So, we just discussed a plot about a little girl and the story was formed. And then VR technology came in and I said why not we do this in VR! In VR you can literally watch the whole vistas. We always have been followers; some new technology comes in, we want to do it ten years later. But the question here was, what do I know about movies? So, I went for workshops, attended a course in MIT doing imaging and studied a course in screenplay. And ultimately, I got into the act. The film is all about music. I created a lab here where young technicians tried out cameras and see how the result is. Through the results we created a screenplay which would be good for human sensibilities. We shot the whole thing with dummies here and after we got a 43-minute cut, I said ‘let’s do this’ and we went to Rome with the real cast.”

Rahman has gone through a labyrinthine process of mastering the VR technology for making *Le Musk*. “I have had all these opportunities in Hollywood. I am a Academy voter, and have access to the top of the line knowledge. I can go to any parties and meet the top editors and cameramen and directors. So somewhere I think the fear of

breaking the ice into filmmaking was gone. Though my expertise was in music, working in Broadway and a whole lot of things, in 25 years you tend to gain knowledge. First, I had to get confidence to see if I could do this. So, played it to some of the top editor like *Tango in Paris* editor Roberto Perpignani. When he saw it, he asked, ‘Can you come and give a talk in my film school? (Laughs) Then we just went on a recce to Rome, had some advisers from MIT in Massachusetts and so we went ahead with it.” *Le Musk* stars Nora Arnezeder, Guy Burnet and Munirih Grace and a preview of the film was held in Las Vegas at the NAB in a room with specialized chairs.

Moving on, Rahman opines that there is a whole bunch of good composers in Bollywood today. “Amit Trivedi, Sneha, Shankar Ehsaan Loy, Saleem Sulaiman. But what is lacking is the team which used to produce, like Bhansali and Ismail Darbar were creating beautiful stuff and then Jatin Lalit and Aditya Chopra. Subhash Ghai’s *Taal* and Imtiaz Ali’s *Rockstar*, all that teaming should come back where people put passion into creating great stuff.”

Rahman agrees that when a film fails the composer too feels the backlash. But many a time a film may fail but the songs do well. “There are many factors. The choice that the director makes in placing

the song and how it's choreographed. Look at the song like *Chaiyya Chaiyya*. It's not just the song. It's the risk which Shah Rukh Khan and Malaika took, how Mani sir put them on the train, Santosh Sivan's cinematography, Farah Khan's choreography, how Sukhwinder Singh and Sapna Awasthi sang; it's a combination of factors. Sometimes a great song is reduced to nothing due to visuals."

Rahman who generally steers clear from any controversy stepped out to support the 'Me Too' movement. Singer Chinmayi naming lyricist Vairamuthu had ruffled the feathers in Kollywood. Rahman came out strongly to say that women should be allowed to vent any outrage against them. Rubbishing the rumour that he has said he won't work with Chinmayi anymore, Rahman said, "What did Chinmayi do, poor thing? She only tried to help others. It shows the power of social media... what Twitter can do. One has to be careful. I think injecting the fear is a great thing so that nobody will mess around for the fear of being exposed. We also have sisters and daughters. It is so important to respect them in the place of work. If those at fault are being exposed, they should be. Everybody gets what they deserve. It's karma!"

Rahman remains the shy and reticent persona, totally comfortable being with a handful of familiar faces. "I have a phobia of meeting people. If I meet 30 people I feel like throwing up. I am so used to being alone in my life, secluded. Seeing a sea of audience from the stage is different. They are not on the stage with me! That's why if one person comes for an autograph I don't mind. But if they trigger 200 people to me, I run away," he laughs.

Rahman had once said that Rajnikanth's spiritual politics may work well for the state. Now that both Rajnikanth and Kamal Haasan are in the race in politics, knowing Rahman's take on it made sense. "Both Rajnikanth and Kamal Haasan are my friends and nice people. We hang out sometimes. It's good that they have decided to be in politics. Both of them have good intentions for the people. Who will make it and what kind of politics will we see, only time will answer."

While trying to get him make express his candid takes on controversies, I wondered if it wasn't right to seek celebrity opinion on issues and which in turn rake more counter attacks. "I keep telling this. If there is a surgeon who is operating, if something big happens, what should he concentrate upon? Surgery or giving a political statement? So, music is like that to me. If I have to

internalise to deliver something beautiful and if some nasty thing happens, I need to do my profession right so that can change people's lives. But leave my commitment and do it half-heartedly for something else."

The pressures of working away from home for long durations has been harnessed to some extent. Wife Saira, who was only concentrating on children and the house hold matters is a bit more eased out now that the kids have grown up. "She accompanies me to LA more often now. She is a shy person and so not really interested in taking a role in the organisation. But she is into styling my look now. All that you see of me in public appearances, it's her doing (laughs). Children too, I feel I made a mistake in not grooming them in their earlier years. Now I take them along for concerts and they too are getting more interested in music now."

Rahman is fully occupied with the post-production of his movies while aiming to release them this year. The response to these films will determine his future course in filmmaking. AR Rahman is also to score music for Sony Music that has acquired the music rights for Fox Star Studios' *Kizie Aur Manny*, which is an official Hindi remake of the Hollywood film *The Fault in Our Stars*. Collaborative works with Stevie Wonder, Bryan Adams and other international musicians await in the pipeline.

Rahman believes that each individual has the power to make a change and it is this belief that has propelled him to venture out of his comfort zone, break the glass ceilings to set trends and become the torch bearer of creative originations. AR Rahman is fashioning a chapter for himself in the history of world cinema and is already the referral point for success formula! The brilliantly gifted composer stands aloft as the nation's pride setting new miles stones with each passing day!

(Excerpts taken from *Notes of a Dream: The Authorized Biography of AR Rahman* written by Krishna Trilok and published by Penguin Viking)



The Author Speaks

Author Krishna Trilok speaks about authoring his destiny with *Notes of a Dream*, which is an authorised biography on the composer with the Midas touch — AR Rahman.



He is just 25 but is already the author of two bestsellers. Krishna Trilok, hailing from a creative family, couldn't have stayed as a face in the crowd. His parents Sharada and Trilok Nair are interwoven with Kollywood and the advertising world. His mother Sharada, a cousin of ace filmmaker Mani Ratnam, has been involved with Ratnam's film production in one or the other capacity. Trilok happened to work with this young boy called AS Dileep Kumar whom he introduced to Mani Ratnam and the boy was none other than the musical genius AR Rahman.

It is rather a strange coincidence that Sharada Trilok's son Krishna goes on to author a biography of AR Rahman years later. At 25 to have the Penguin as his publisher and that too with AR Rahman being the theme of his book speaks loud for him.

Looking back, Krishna says that AR Rahman turning a director had him sit up to wonder why would someone who was so successful in making music and loved for it would want to step out of his comfort zone to make a film? "So, I wrote a mail to Rahman to ask him about it. He knew that I was a writer as he tweeted appreciating my first book when it was released. So, I pitched it to him saying, 'Your life has always been dotted with turning points. First you were a session's player. Then you turned into a programmer. Then you became a jingles composer, there after became a Tamil film composer. From Tamil you went to Hindi films and then went international. *Vande Mataram* happened and then a Mandarin film happened. You embrace a new feature from time to time. Can we do a book on your new turning point, featuring all others too?"

Krishna hadn't expected a response from Rahman in affirmative but Rahman said, "I really like the idea.

PHOTO CREDIT: AMAR RAMESH

Let's go forward with it." Then began the joy ride. Krishna joined Rahman in Mumbai, had meals together, drove around the city and spent a lot of time talking to him. From how everyone knows Rahman to be a reluctant conversationalist, Krishna was surprised to see him indulge in free-flowing conversations on just about everything, fusing philosophy with music, the Oscar night and even just lounged around to observe Rahman at his business.

Krishna also wanted to elicit the viewpoints of some key figures in his life like Mani Ratnam, Krishna's own parents for whom Rahman had composed jingles in his early years, Rahman's mother Kareema Begum, wife Saira and his sisters Reihana and Fathima and director Imtiaz Ali with whom Rahman worked not long ago. Krishna planned a rounded representation and hence also spoke to technicians who worked with Rahman.

Krishna has gone in-depth about Rahman's growing years, his trials and tribulations, suicidal thoughts and metamorphoses, his rise in career, expansion and cross-over to Bollywood and Hollywood. That glorious Oscar winning night and the global celebrities that came in touch with the musical genius along the path and views and experiences of interaction with the legend by the film fraternity. *Notes of a Dream* is engrossing from the word go!

The book took a year and half to get ready along with a foreword from filmmaker Danny Boyle and as the time for publishing approached Krishna had to get Rahman's approval. At that point Rahman was in Boston, and Krishna in Chennai. "Penguin had announced a deadline and the stores were getting ready to stock them and promotional events were being planned. Newspapers had published saying, 'his was the most awaited book'. So, we couldn't delay. When I asked Rahman sir how was he going to finalise the script, he said, 'Come on Skype and read the manuscript aloud to me.' Every night he would sit for

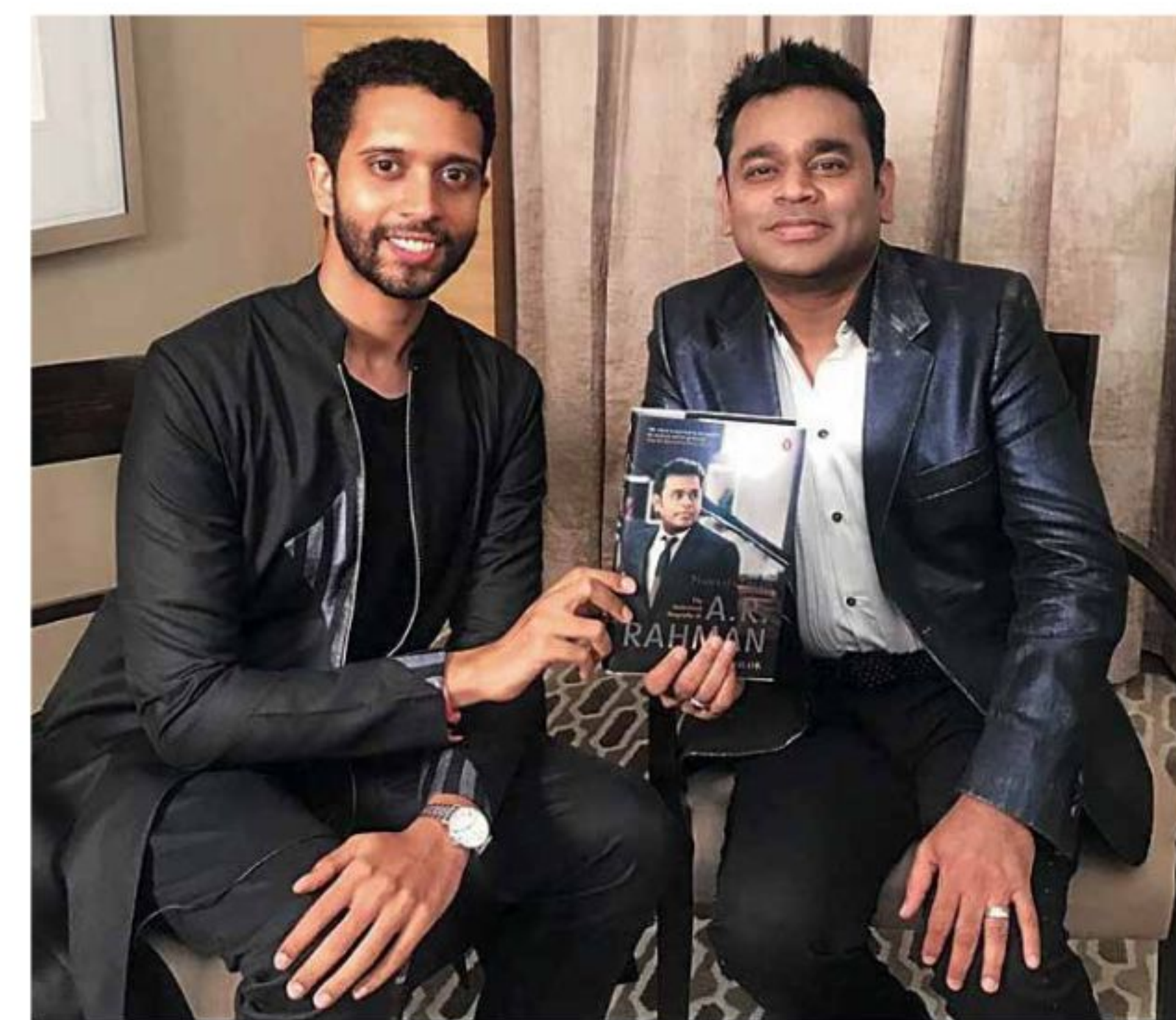
four hours and I would read out chapter by chapter while he intently stared at me. It used to unnerve me at times. There was a time when I sat and watched the historic Oscar winning night on television and here I was narrating that very episode of that very Oscar night as told by him to him! I would fumble at times for the sheer profundity of that experience. He approved most of the content. He only said, 'Don't write anything that will be offensive to others'. He would suggest some words to be replaced. He is so sharp that no detailing would miss his attention," reveals Krishna.

Rahman has value added to every life he touched. By agreeing to let Krishna author his biography, Rahman clearly lent his Midas touch upon the author's future as a writer. "His perspective as a young person interested me."

Rahman further adds, "I told him I will see it after he is done with it. I was in Boston babysitting my kids and studying in Berkley when he called to say he had completed the book. He said, 'If you don't see it, it will go as it is'. God! What pressure that was! I asked him to come on Skype and read it to me. Couple of things we removed out of respect for other people. My past ten years where I evolved into film making is a new aspect to people that I liked that been covered."

Rahman appreciates the efforts of mustering rare details regarding his father. "Some of it even I did not know because it comes from other people's perspective. Also of my becoming the director and turning a producer of my movie *99 Songs* and my student's viewpoints were all very interesting because more than me, others associated with me have given their thoughts and details."

Krishna points that the book conveys another facet of the film industry. The growth of Rahman or Mani Ratnam in some ways is bound to the growth of the film industry. "These are the faces that spear headed the globalization of the industry. In that sense the book is also a study of the



film industry's evolution," he says.

Krishna had this flair for writing even as a school-going kid when he would sit jotting short stories that he never revealed to anyone. Story telling engrossed him from a young age. "I was surrounded by great storytellers, right from the beginning. My grandmother, our cook and driver were all fantastic storytellers and I learnt a lot about narration from these people."

Krishna was not significantly interested or even good at academics in school and activities like sports or learning an art did not lure him either. As a teenager he silently nurtured a desire to take to writing and clearly story telling emerged as his passion on watching films like *Chronicles of Narnia*. That triggered his interest to tell a fantasy story like *Lord of the Rings*. So, as a 13-year-old he began writing and finally after a decade, he found an agent to publish his first book titled *Sharikrida* which means a game of Chess in Sanskrit.

Initially the story was set against Europe but on publisher's demand, Krishna had to indianize the characters and set it against the Indian backdrop. The first book infused confidence to the young writer to set forth into the path of authoring books. "Writing a book is not a lucrative career in India which has to change. But it's a wonderful journey to tell stories. I intend to write a love story next now that this book has seen the day light and is received so well."

The young boy has embarked upon the career close to his heart with a bang and to see the red carpet unfolding for him royally is no surprise! **S**

“Staying *relatable is not much of a* Challenge!”

| By SAPNA SARFARE |

YouTube sensation Bhuvan Bam speaks to *Society* about being creative with his super popular YouTube channel *BB Ki Vines*, crossing the 10M subscriber mark, being musically inclined and understanding what people want and like.

Just go on YouTube. And type these two words – Bhuvan Bam. Try it, I suggest. Chances are you will be bombarded with his *BB Ki Vines* videos. Ever since this 24-year-old started his online videos filled with humour and later became renowned for his *BB Ki Vines* video series on YouTube and other social media channels, he has managed to maintain his position as an internet sensation. One can openly say that many of the regular people who

go online have seen his YouTube channel which is around the life of an urban teenager and involves his parents, two friends Bancho and Sameer Fuddi, his Titu *Mama*, Bancho's Dubai-based underworld don father Makichu, Mr Hola the landlord, Babbliji the teacher and more. Each episode is about 2-8 minutes long and uses humour to tinkle your funny bones. The plus point is that it is in simple Hindi and quite easy to handle.





Bhuvan started off pretty young and it was a chance video that he did which caught people's eye that made him realise he has caught on to something. Ask him on his beginnings and he instantly answers, "*BB Ki Vines* happened by accident. A news reporter during Jammu floods asked a lady that 'How do you feel losing your son in floods? This illogical brainless question provoked me to make a satire video and post it on social media. I randomly created a page with a couple of more videos which went viral.'" It is always good to be aware of what is happening around you. One never knows where a good idea is lying. The best part is he shoots the videos on his phone and spends absolutely nothing on technical support. It is just him holding the phone to record while playing all the roles.

You have to view a few of his videos to understand how deep he has gone to create the number of characters in the videos. Each of them are unique by themselves and you feel you have seen them around you. One can say they are as *desi* as one can get. Be it his typical clueless parents or his over-smart horny uncle to his friends who are in their own zone and even his angry Masterji with student issues, they are real people. You know each one of these characters. He reveals, "Most of the characters in *BB Ki Vines* have evolved from sheer observations. Bancho and Sameer are just like any other friends, Masterji is inspired from all my school teachers, and Babluji is just another randomly created character. Travelling helps me in meeting new people. I pick up traits from some interesting ones. But, Titu *Mama* out of all characters is inspired by my actual mama."

Bhuvan initially started with FB and then shifted to YouTube. One assumes the move came due to the fact that you get a wider audience and better money. Of course, with the move to shift to YouTube, he must have seen some changes happen. "I never really shifted away from Facebook. I still post my episodes on both YouTube and Facebook. Earlier when it was just Facebook, a friend suggested me to start posting on YouTube in order to earn money through my videos. Never did I imagine the massive reach

of any of the platforms. But eventually, both the mediums help me reach out to maximum people."

Any creative work depends on fans and Bhuvan got a boost with fan following from Pakistan which later spread all over India and other places. Now this is something that needs to be noted. He himself must have found this interesting. He agrees on this point and adds, "I had never imagined anyone outside of my locality to watch my videos. Before YouTube I was only posting on Facebook. When the comments started flooding in from Pakistan, I was taken aback. I kept on wondering how this video can reach some other country without spending a single penny! Later I realised that YouTube was banned in Pakistan. Hence most of their consumption was on Facebook. It's amazing how social media can reach every corner of the world. If anyone can assure me viewership from North Korea too, I'll add subtitles!"

Picking favourites is quite silly but we want to ask Bhuvan about his favourite episode or things to do on *BB Ki Vines*. Personally, Titu *Mama* and Angry Masterji episodes are fabulous as both are as real as it gets. They are his favourites too. "Both of these characters have great relatability and their uniqueness is loved by many! Almost all Masterji episodes are my favourite and 'Saalgira Party' of Titu *Mama* tops my list."

Those who have watched *BB Ki Vines* are used to and love the language which is quite funny and goes with his content. But at times, Bhuvan must be getting backlash because anyone with access to internet gets offended on anything and everything. Despite being just 24, Bhuvan is quite aware of criticism, handling



it and take a stock of what he should do and say. "Offence is the only thing which is free and can be taken easily! I've realised that pleasing each and every individual on the internet is not possible. But personally, I refrain from commenting on politics or religion. Maybe because I feel I'm not too mature to articulate my words properly. And insult comedy is something which I don't need to get into as I have my own universe with 16 characters. *Unhi mein se jiska marzi mazaak udaao.*"

For those unaware, Bhuvan's channel has crossed the 10 million subscribers mark and he is the first one to do so. It must be a different kind of high. The process of crossing it and now trying to achieve more would have been exciting. "I had never imagined a 1000 subscribers. Touching a one million mark was the only time when I thought I had arrived," he exclaims. "But gradually I realised that the number game is the weakest of all. If your content is good, people will subscribe and share. So I started focusing more on my skills which added more numbers to my channel. But deep down, as a kid, I hate calling it 10 million. I love to say "1 crore *log dekhte hain mujhe*". See? That sounded massive!"

But his days of struggles are still not over. There are still some issues he is still struggling with when it comes to being online and creating content that is relatable. Like any other creative person, Bhuvan struggles with mostly with writing. "Writer's block is my new friend. We're together all the time. I feel art is something which cannot be done forcefully and that's why I take my time to write because once the video is posted on the internet, it's going to stay there forever. Staying relatable is not much of a challenge! As long as you're grounded, people will relate to you."

If you follow Bhuvan's career till date, you would know of his short film *Plus Minus*. And the response for it was quite good, in terms of the number of hits it got and also the appreciation. With a smile, he replies, "*Plus Minus* was my debut short film and it

was my one of most ambitious projects of 2018. The storyline was something which I loved and immediately said yes to! The entire team, Jyoti Kapur Das (director-writer), Guneet Monga (producer) and Rohit Raj (producer) were very excited to give life to the story! Also, working with my favourite Divya Dutta was a dreamy experience! The video did way better than our expectations. People who expect comedy on *BB Ki Vines* were surprised to see such a different concept on the channel."

With a successful channel and his other work going on, he must be feeling the pressure to be 100% with what he offers in terms of *BB Ki Vines* or anything else he does. Bhuvan does feel the continuous pressure. "Imagine 11M people judging you at once! Not everyone's gonna like your work always! Every artist gives his/her 100% but the ball is in always people's court. The pressure to do well is constant but I'm living my dream and doing this out of love."

Being acknowledged for your work on various platforms and awarded for it must be quite good. Bhuvan is quite clear in terms of these things. "Acknowledgements and awards for me are the comments on my YouTube channel. My rewards are the people who come to watch me perform live and greet me on the streets. This is the major driving force. The smiles on people's face drives an artist to perform better each time."

If you notice, there is a surge of YouTubers and people providing online content. That means competition. Bhuvan must be feeling threatened or that it can lead to overdose. On being asked, he answers with genuine warmth, "I'm glad and proud of every creator who is emerging and producing content. We have so much talent in our country and it is slowly taking shape! An artist who gets threatened by another artist is not really an artist himself. People love variety, and India has variety! As long as the community is together and united, more and more content can flow.

Overdose can never be a problem. More the content, better is it for the viewers."

Ask him about his influences and the kind of people he looks forward to watching these days online, Bhuvan instantly replies, "I've grown up watching Johnny Lever, Kader Khan and Govinda movies! I feel that's my kind of humour. All the 90s kid would relate! Never had any western influence in comedy. In the music space, Hemant Kumar, Rafi and Kishore Kumar have been my influences. John Mayer, U2, Greenday and Coldplay have been my idols."

Speaking of music, Bhuvan is also known for his singing and music which are his passion. He reveals, "Music is something which takes me away from the sorrows of life. I started learning classical music in fourth grade. Since then I've been playing/singing. Two years in a restaurant performing ghazals and Bollywood music inspired me to write my own songs. 2018 has been the year of music for me. I've composed six songs this year of which three were released with music videos. All three videos have got an overwhelming reception. When people sing your songs back with you during live concerts, you realise you've touched hearts! Now that people know about the musician in me, 2019's gonna be more musical!"

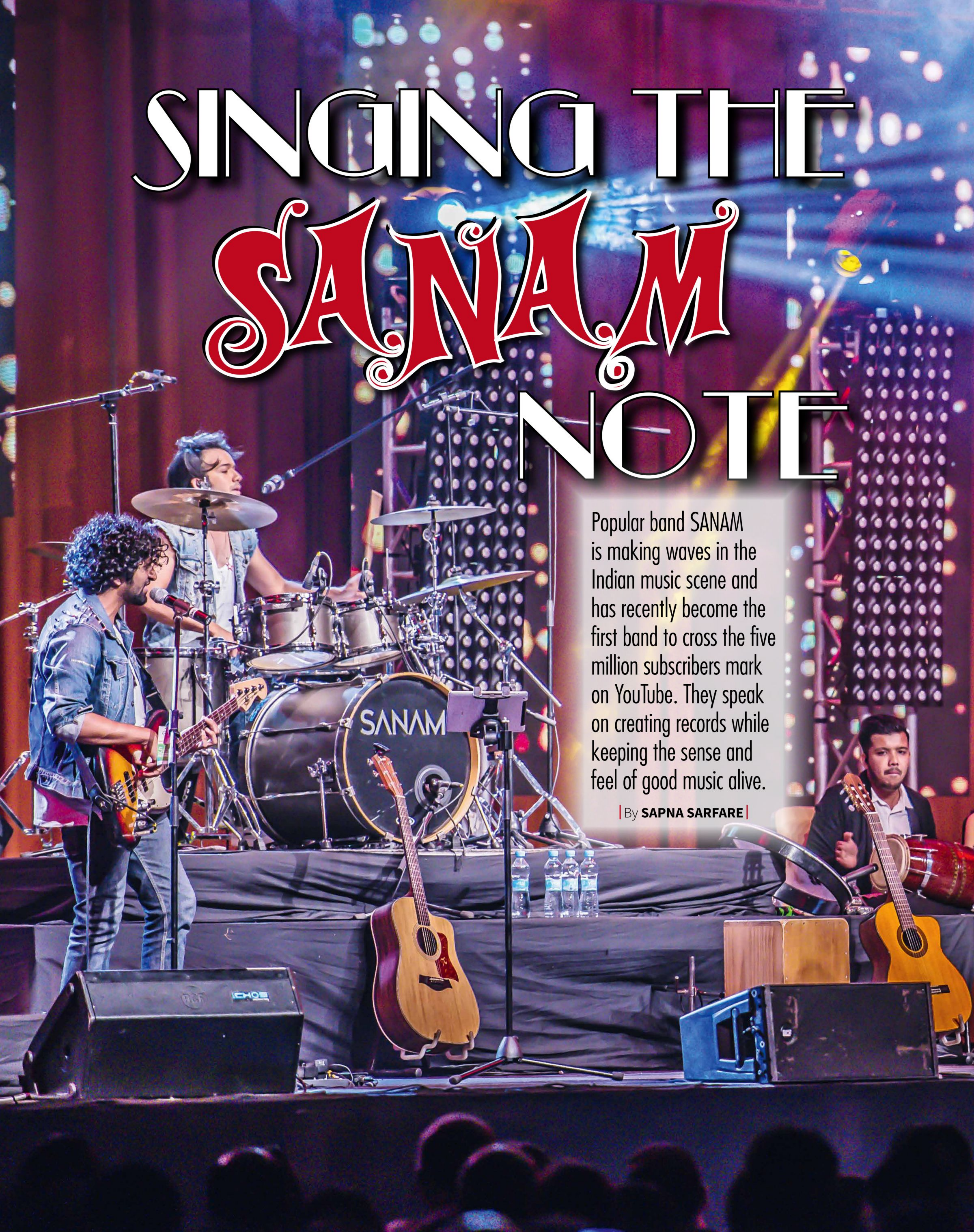
While the interview comes to an end, we inquire on whether we will see some new adventures of Bhuvan in *BB Ki Vines* or anything different is planned. Bhuvan feigns cluelessness as to what he plans to offer in 2019. "I don't plan things in advance. The maximum I know is what I'll be doing next week. But there are more short films lined up along with the signature *BBKV* episodes and BB music. All in all, 2019 will be entertainment!"

Sometimes all it takes is a bit of humour to add some fun to our lives and make us notice around us. Bhuvan Bam is doing just that with his *BB Ki Vines*, music and more. We would like to use Titu Mama's word of praise for him to end the interview – *Shabaash, Shabaash!* 

SINGING THE SANAM NOTE

Popular band SANAM is making waves in the Indian music scene and has recently become the first band to cross the five million subscribers mark on YouTube. They speak on creating records while keeping the sense and feel of good music alive.

| By **SAPNA SARFARE** |



Indian music industry is quite a strong place where soulful tunes still manage to make a mark. But it is not as easy as it seems with changing platforms and public choices. Amidst this you have the Indian rock band SANAM making waves in the Indian music industry. This popular band recently crossed the five million subscribers mark on YouTube and they have performed all over India and the globe. The band SANAM consists of Sanam Puri (Lead Vocalist), Venky S (Bassist and Backing Vocalist), Samar Puri (Lead Guitarist) and Keshav Dhanraj (Drummer). Ben Thomas is their business manager and the fifth member of the band.

The band came together courtesy Time's Music's Supastars. Venky reveals,

"Samar and I were classmates in ISM. Samar and Sanam are brothers. So the three of us go back a long way. We formed our first band together in school. I met Keshav in our college days, through the music scene down south. We formed a short lived band called 'The Previous Band'. Ironically that has become our 'previous band'. When Keshav moved to Mumbai (from Chennai), Samar and Sanam had also just moved there (from Delhi), they were looking for a drummer and Keshav was looking for musicians in Mumbai to jam with. I introduced them and they hit it off in Keshav's garage. They connected really easily both musically and as friends."

Regarding the contest they won, over 1,200 bands/artist across India were participating. "I joined them in the finals,

which we eventually won and we have been together ever since," Venky revealed. "Being young and impressionable, we had a totally different image of what signing with a music label could do for us. However, slowly we realised the reality of this industry and how things actually work. It was after we met our business manager Ben Thomas (post our three year contract with Times Music), that we all decided to work hard towards building and bringing back the independent music scene and band culture back into India. We knew it would be a slow and hard route. But our goal collectively as a band was clear. We haven't looked back ever since."

Since it is not a one person band, the name is quite interesting. Why Sanam? Sanam reveals, "Initially, we called ourselves The SQS Project. Since it was just Samar, Keshav and me at the time. SQS (Samar Qesh Sanam). However, after Venky joined us in the finals of the contest,



this name no longer made sense. We had to keep it the same for our three year contract. After we met Ben, we decided to start afresh. He used to send out our video and audio links to his large network of people in the industry and would often get replies saying 'congrats on starting your new construction company'. Without clicking the link, the name SQS Project sounded like a construction company and looked the least bit musical at first glance. It was clear that we had to change the band name!"

The brainstorming session threw up over 200-300 names. Sanam further adds, "None of those names really connected with us or our music. Until one day, before a show, Keshav and I were discussing the band names we had just come up with and by mistake (since it was dark) while reading the name Sanam electric, we just read SANAM. We immediately looked at each other and it just seemed perfect! After the show we all sat together and discussed. We realised that there is no better name to describe us. It's a simple and easy to remember name. It has a direct musical connect and is a word used in countless songs. SANAM is a word used in many different languages. So it connects with a larger audience. The word in Hindi is a term of endearment such as beloved. This completely relates to all four of us as Individuals and the music we make. There was no doubt that this is in fact the most perfect name for us."

Ask them to describe their musical journey and the kind of music they like to create and perform together, Keshav calls their journey a roller coaster ride like their lives. "Not in terms of good and bad, but in terms of phases and learning and experiences. Since we are four different individuals working on everything together, it is really important to respect, understand and learn from each other. Having good cheer is key to keeping everything balanced. So in this roller coaster of a ride, what's constant is that we are all in this together! That's our strength! We learn from each other both musically and in general, about life, by being around each other all

the time. The good times become great and the hard times become easier when you have each other. Our music has been given many titles so far. But the one name that sticks is when many of our fans say that any song we touch, gets 'Sanamized'. That's basically all four of our ideas and influences put together. In terms of genres, we are basically a Pop Rock band. We are growing and will continue to grow as musicians. The journey is what's important to us. Making the music, having a good time and feeling good about the final product. This is why we do it. For happiness and the strength we get when we are together."

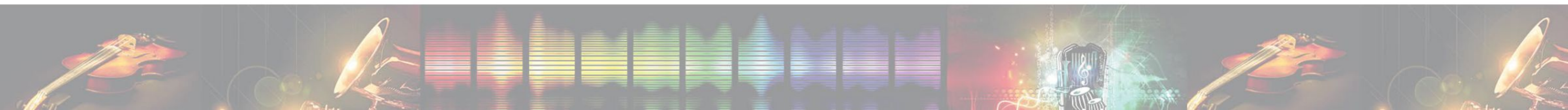
Ask Samar about influences on their music and he confides about listening to different styles of music. "I love to browse through new artists and listen to new songs that are making waves around the world. From bands like U2 and Cold Play, to Arabic music, also artists like Kendrick Lamar, my list can go on. Each of us have completely different musical influences. This works to our advantage. Also, we make sure that all four of us are happy with every song before we release it. As far as personal influences go, everyone in my life is an influence and someone I can learn from. My mom and dad, to my brother Sanam, to brothers from other mothers (Venky, Keshav and Ben) and of course all my friends. We are forever changing and moulding into new phases of life. It's important to grow, learn and experience life as much as we."

For Keshav, every music genre is important for the band. "It's important to know, understand and learn from every kind of music. For example, Sanam enjoys listening to background scores, movies and videos game theme songs etc. Venky grew up listening to a lot of old Bollywood songs too. Having said that, while recreating old songs and interpreting them into our own renditions, we end up learning a lot. While breaking a song down to understand a bit of how it was created, it opens you up into a new world you otherwise wouldn't have noticed when you just listen to the song normally. Venky loves arranging our songs

and enjoys listening to a lot of references before taking any step forward. However, when we make original music, we tend to lean towards making something fresh and new. Some of us prefer to work without any references or clear influences, while some of us prefer use references to narrow down on ideas. It keeps changing depending on the song. In India, film music is usually what is considered as the popular music around. Since that is the music that spreads and is being played on every channel or on radio."

The band happens to be one of the first ones to go all out on online with their own channel on YouTube. Sanam reveals that after their contract with Times Music left them confused and stagnant, meeting Ben made them realise the importance of a worthy management backing in the life of any artist. "Ben has been guiding us since then and has always been our support. When we first met Ben, we were all very clear about our dream of trying to change the music scene in India. To bring back band culture and to make music independently, without having to rely on anyone else. The freedom of making music you like to make, the way you want to make it. That is something we all wanted. But we had nothing to show at that time. Ben suggested that we start putting out some videos on YouTube so he can showcase our music to the market. That's actually how we started uploading videos. We never thought it turn out the way it has so far. I still remember the first day we got a cheque from Google saying that we had made X amount of money on some of the videos we had uploaded. It was a pleasant surprise and really encouraged us to take a step further on this path."

Talks about digital world changing the music scenario globally, Ben feels digital platforms means 'access to create, distribute, discover, promote, share and consume content'. "The shift of music consumption from physical to digital sure has simplified the process for labels/artists enabling one to be able to distribute music to all the stores within minutes and from where ever



you are from your laptop decreasing the investment and logistics involved in this step which greatly helps artists. Marketing and promotion is the key to amplify your music and reach out to a larger audience by breaking out of the clutter. It's an untamed digital music landscape with the potential to make musical talents in a small pocket of the world turn into global superstars. Social media opens doors to fan engagement and direct communication hence not eliminating but to a great extent diminishing the role of radio stations, television and press. A creative digital marketing strategy is the real game changer now. The possibility to reach millions of listeners through a YouTube video or a tweet. What word-of-mouth was before is like hitting the share button or sharing via a quick text or direct message. Who would have thought that in less than half a lifetime we will witness the transition from slow patience testing slow dial-up connections to high speed internet across varied devices? Digital surely is changing the terrain of the industry and as the management we need to constantly try and foresee what may come next and act in time to take advantage of the evolving landscape."

Speaking about being the first Indian band to cross the five million subscriber mark, Sanam feels fortunate to have a wonderful audience for their music. "We never thought of things growing this way. It definitely feels really good. Our aim from the start has been to make good music together, to be happy and enjoy the process of making music. When facts like these are brought to our notice, it only motivates us to put out more music and to spread love and happiness wherever we can. That is what we believe in. We don't really know the reason why so many people have subscribed. That's the best part; I don't think anyone can ever say they know why. Each person who has subscribed to us, might have done it for different reasons. We are just glad to have an ever growing family like this."

The Indian music industry has seen some major changes in recent years and the band belongs to the younger generation with



different music taste. Venky feels that Indian music these days has been influenced by Western pop music a lot. "In fact, every generation had different influences from other music that was popular or new around the world. If you listen carefully to a lot of old Indian film music, you will see a lot of similarities and influences of western music. Similarly, today musicians and composers are always trying something new to connect with the masses. What is different for us is the fact that there were also many non-film artists (bands and solo artists) that were popular while we were growing up. Today it mostly film music in India. The difference here is when you are making music for a film, you need to make the song fit the context of the movie, impress the director, producer, actors etc. But when you make non-film music, you make it to satisfy your creative side and this becomes your personal avenue to express yourself to the world. To be able to do that and also sustain yourself financially is hard in India today."

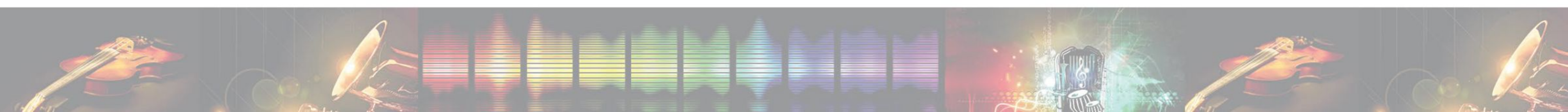
Vulgar lyrics and tunes are also taking over the industry, but Keshav still feels there are nice songs too. "Actually one reason why we really enjoy recreating old songs is because those songs are really well-written and composed with so much thought. The new songs that are making waves around the country today seem to have a very short life. People seem to enjoy it for a year or two, sometimes even just a few months and then they wait for the next song like that. We have decided to make songs that we are happy with and songs that we enjoy working on. We don't

want to make songs just for the sake of releasing something that people can listen to for a few days or months. Our challenge is between wanting to make something we are all happy with and the consistency of releasing something as often as possible."

The band SANAM is looked forward to for their live performances too which they find exciting. "Our live shows are completely different from the videos you see of us on our YouTube channel. At live shows we get to showcase a whole new side. We try to cover as many styles of music as we can! To keep everyone interested, excited and entertained right till the end. Every concert is memorable in its own way," explains Sanam.

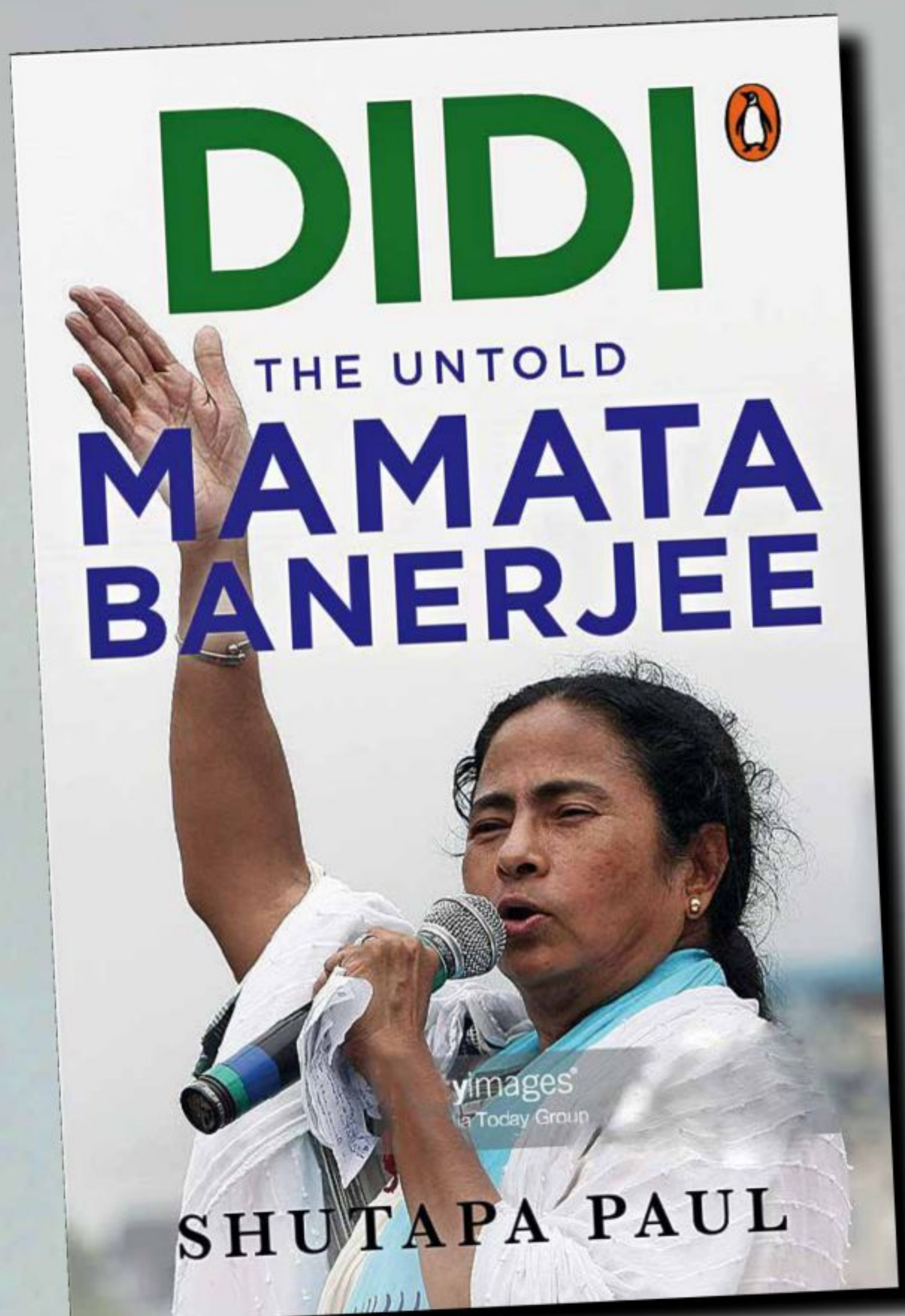
If you have followed the band, you would know them as India's One Direction. Keshav reveals, "People call us different names. Fab 4, India's One Direction etc. It's just their way of expressing love and showing us what we mean to them. It feels great! We hope to achieve that kind of success too. And maybe one day, a younger upcoming band maybe referred to as the new age SANAM". The chat ends soon and the fans would love to know about their upcoming plan. Samar reveals, "Lots of new songs! Regional, renditions and lots of originals as well. We are working on different sounds and styles these days. We hope to share them all with you soon. Even in terms of videos, we are trying a few new things that we can't wait to share with you guys."

If you listen carefully to the band SANAM, you realise good work lives forever. With high expectations, we expect them to better their best now. **S**





'As Of Now, There Is No One Quite Like Mamata Banerjee On The Anvil'



With the biography *Didi: The Untold Mamata Banerjee*, journalist and author Shutapa Paul lets us understand the mind of a politician who has changed the dynamics of West Bengal and Indian politics. The author talks about Banerjee and the biography's process in detail.

| By SAPNA SARFARE |



A biography or an autobiography says a lot of the person on whom it is written. While many have been written on Indian politicians, a recent one is fast catching people's interest. *Didi: The Untold Mamata Banerjee* penned by senior journalist Shutapa Paul has been making quite some noise (positive one for sure) in the circuits. After all, writing about a woman politician of the stature and calibre as Mamata Banerjee is not an easy task. Published by Penguin India, the book has been released at the perfect time since the present political situation in the country and the upcoming elections will see Didi as Banerjee is known in a position to change the equations.

The very first question to be thrown at Shutapa is that of the thought behind writing this biography on Mamata Banerjee. One would think one particular episode or a series of episodes culminated into her picking up the pen and writing it. Shutapa reveals several factors that led to her coming up with this biography. "The most important of course, was the protagonist herself. Mamata Banerjee has had an eventful life and that I felt, made for a compelling read. She is also one of the few women politicians in India who is in a position of power today. Being a woman myself and hailing from Bengal also aided in this choice. With 2019 Lok Sabha elections coming up, the relevance of Mamata Banerjee and her politics was also a point of interest."

The title of this biography is quite fascinating or rather intriguing – *Didi: The Untold Mamata Banerjee*. She must have gone through a process to come up with it and finalise on it. Can we really say her story is untold? While pondering over the question, she replies after a pause, "Well, the thinking was that what people know about (especially those outside of West Bengal) is limited to a few political episodes. Her real story, her journey as a politician, her early years, and the events that shaped her psyche are largely unknown. The idea



was to chart out the life and times of this firebrand, veteran politician and allow people an opportunity to know about the various facets of her personality."

Shutapa has been in journalism for over a decade and has had experiences in working with both print and electronic media. At the moment she is the founder editor of a video-first, digital media platform for start-ups and entrepreneurs called NewCorp, while also running media consultancy called Dharma Media Consultants. With such vast experience,

her reflections on people and issues will be worth noting. I ask her of how she found Mamata Banerjee as a politician and person solely as a journalist. What makes her such an intriguing national politician rather than just limited to West Bengal? Every time she does or speaks something, it become national news. Shutapa too finds Banerjee's political struggle intriguing. "She created history when she decimated 34 years of the Left Front. She was a virtual nobody, hailing from a lower middle-class family. For her to reach this position of power is inspiring.

Her connect with grassroots people is also a tremendous strength. For years, she has been part of national politics. She has the ability to play king-maker in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. If a non-Congress, non-BJP coalition of like-minded parties finds itself at the Centre, then Mamata will surely be one of the frontrunners for Prime Ministership. While I am impressed by her secular, pro-people stance and her qualities as a mass leader, I would definitely want to see a more cohesive and progressive vision from her for the state and the Centre.”

There is no doubt that she is very different from the other regional players in Indian politics. Shutapa seconds that statement. “Her deep connection with the masses is her greatest strength. She has her finger firmly on the pulse of the people, and this sets her apart from other leaders. Most regional leaders share the similarity of being more interested in their state rather than the nation. But in recent years, Mamata Banerjee has taken up national issues such as demonetization, NRC, etc. You can see that she is re-shaping her public image to suit the political seniority that she naturally enjoys. This national image now requires her vision and statement on economic and social policies that would affect the nation as a whole.”

There is still a niggling question at the back of my mind of whether Shutapa believes Banerjee has it in her to think national rather than just stay local. The reason for asking this question is that many might deem her as regional player than national. Shutapa thinks of Banerjee as a national leader. “She has been a Union Minister several times including Railway Minister. She has played crucial roles in alliances too and in terms of political seniority, she always commands respect. However, to transition from regional to national politics once you are chief minister of the state, the development of Bengal will be significant. Just like the Gujarat model was held up when Narendra Modi threw his hat in the prime ministerial race, people will want to know about what Mamata has



done in Bengal. There are several green shoots of development in the state. But the state government has been playing catch-up with its counterparts, and will require to push even more aggressively to bring in more industry. To take Mamata seriously as a leader with a national perspective, she and her team will have to start speaking more specifically about the macro picture, policies, and politics.”

Coming back to the book, in terms of revealing the life and mind of Banerjee, Shutapa has written it almost like a novel. “I have started with her early life and chronologically followed the various phases in her life till the present time.” But writing the biography was never easy for Shutapa and she has spoken about it in the media. “Writing a biography isn’t easy, especially if it’s of an active politician. While I have tried to be objective and

unbiased, there are always pressures on the author in an environment that is politically charged. Since this was an unauthorized biography, several interviews that I had lined up were cancelled at the last minute. The idea from the start was not to write a hagiography; this book is an honest account backed by hard facts, figures, and gripping interviews.”

Didi: The Untold Mamata Banerjee is an unauthorized biography of a powerful leader. One assumes there are both plus points and pitfalls of writing an unauthorized biography. It might not be well-appreciated by either her or her followers. Shutapa concedes to the fact that an unauthorized biography equals to doing most of the groundwork on her own. “Since the protagonist refused to give me an interview, I had to find novel ways of gathering information. I tracked down her school teachers, especially one of her

favourite teachers from classes 8-9. That was particularly rewarding. I was also able to speak to some of her closest aides, on and off the record. I was lucky to have been given perhaps the last interview by veteran parliamentarian and former Lok Sabha Speaker, Somnath Chatterjee, just a few months before his unfortunate demise. An unauthorised biography however, allowed me the freedom to voice my own perspectives about the protagonist and her politics. The book is an unbiased account of the feisty leader's life and so far, it has been well-received by both her followers and dissenters. We must remember that "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts". Some of these parts are black, some are white, and some grey. Together they create something great. But to understand that greatness one must keep an open mind towards both strengths and flaws."

And there were quite a few incidences which probably changed and made Banerjee the politician that we see today. Shutapa agrees but states three incidents that changed Banerjee's life forever. "The first was in 1984, when she recorded her first electoral victory by defeating Somnath Chatterjee. Second was the fatal blow on her head by CPI (M) goons in 1990. And third, was the agitation against the Tata-Singur plant and Nandigram firing that ensured the defeat of the Left Front, paving the way for Mamata Banerjee as the state's first women chief minister."

Mamata Banerjee comes across as someone who wants to do a lot for the people but strong emotions and at times lack of practical thinking makes her lose control of what she either says or does. Shutapa reveals, "In my

book, I mention that Mamata Banerjee is definitely driven by emotions and theatrics but with age and political maturity, she is more tempered now. What everyone perceives as madness, more often than not has a method to it. To take on the Left in the Bengal of yore, one needed certain amount of madness and passion, and Mamata dared when the others did not."

As a woman who is also an acclaimed journalist, Shutapa's vision of women politicians like Banerjee will be different. I want to know from her if she thinks they have the X factor to change Indian politics and the things that can be done more to see more women politicians in power. She reveals, "Politics, as in most other fields, is still male-dominated. It is tough to be a woman politician in India and I have the utmost respect for all women politicians cutting across parties. Women politicians



have a different equation with their followers in India. If you see, most of them are elevated to the mother or sister role very easily by their followers. J Jayalithaa was Amma, Mamata Banerjee is Didi, and Mayawati is Behenji. Mamata's followers share an almost familial bond with her. We need more women politicians in the country. They can make for able, sensitive leaders who can keep the people's interest central in their politics. Political parties must encourage more female leaders at all levels starting from the Panchayat stage. The Women's Reservation Bill unfortunately still remains a lapsed bill. If passed, it will ensure 33 percent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. Political parties and the civil society must push for its immediate passage."

When asked if Banerjee has read the biography, Shutapa smiles and answers, "The first copy of the book was sent to chief minister's office. I recently heard that she did pick up the book at the Kolkata airport. I'm yet to hear from her directly." But her battle continued even after the book got published. She did face a few challenges even after the book's publication and being out on the shelves. Shutapa reveals, "There were some hiccups when I was organizing the book launch in Delhi. A well-known Lutyens' Delhi venue refused permission; reasons best known to them. One of the speakers was made to pull out too, just a day before the launch. But I managed to pull off the event of with the help of the Penguin team, and it was a resounding success. The book was launched by Jairam Ramesh, Rajya Sabha MP (Congress), followed by a panel discussion with him, Sanjay Singh, Rajya Sabha MP (AAP), and Swapan Dasgupta, Rajya Sabha MP (Presidential nominee). NewsX was media partner and aired a special show."

Banerjee's rule and the Left run West Bengal have very distinct differences. Shutapa reveals, "Mamata Banerjee is quite leftist in her views herself. Her pro-farmer

stance has led to Bengal's current land acquisition policy. While it safeguards the farmers, it also impedes large industry. If Bengal must progress and develop, it needs large industries who require large tracts of land. Without a massive industrial push, job creation will remain an issue; something which bothered the Left too. But when former chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee tried to change it by giving large pieces of land for chemical and automotive hubs, it backfired. Mamata is playing a balancing act and it's a tough position to be in."

Books especially biographies are quite an effort. Now that she has started with a bang thanks to *Didi*:

The Untold Mamata Banerjee, one wonder if Shutapa has any plans of writing similar books or even any book soon. She quickly responds, "I'd love to write another political biography or may be of someone from the world of cinema. No plans yet though. But I am toying with couple of ideas in the fiction and non-fiction genres."

While the interview comes to an end, a question comes to mind and I ask Shutapa about it. Mamata Banerjee is a product of her era which made her the politician that she is. Will we get to see any politician esp. a woman politician like her in today's time and age? Shutapa does hope that there will be in future. "As of now, there is no one quite like Mamata Banerjee on the anvil. Most of the younger women politicians



come from the privileged classes, and we are yet to see a female voice and face emerging from the grassroots. I am sure there are many women who are worthy, but the paths must be cleared and they must be allowed to come into the limelight. There are some young male leaders who are in the fray, but we will have to wait and see which way their politics takes them. I would keep an eye out for Jignesh Mevani, Kanhaiya Kumar, and Hardik Patel."

With that we part ways but the interest has already been ignited. Shutapa Paul with *Didi: The Untold Mamata Banerjee* will probably change the way we look at the maverick politician with the power to change the destiny of Indian politics. More to woman power! **S**

On a New Note



With 2019 bringing new beginnings, we start the year with four dishes to suit different seasons. Chef Mahesh Padala, Executive Chef, The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace, gives recipes that will keep your mood agreeable in every season.

GRILLED RACK OF SPRING LAMB WITH CRUSHED NEW POTATO AND ANCHOVY BUTTER (SPRING)

Inside-outside:

180 Gms Lamb
50 Ml Olive Oil
5 Gms Garlic
1 Sprig Thyme
1 Sprig Rosemary
Salt, to Taste
80 Gms New Potato
10 Gms Soft Butter
3 Gms Anchovy Fillet
3 Gms Chives

For Anchovy butter:

80 Gms Butter
10 Gms Red Onion
20 Gms Anchovy Fillet
10 Gms Dijon Mustard
2 Gms Zested Lemon

The art of making:

Marinate the lamb rack with olive oil, thyme, rosemary, salt, garlic and keep it in the chiller for five hours. Boil the new potatoes with rosemary, butter and salt. In a small saucepan, melt the butter and add chopped onion to it; add the anchovy

fillet and cook for one minute and allow to cool further. Combine cooled anchovy, soft butter, lemon zest, mustard and chopped chives. Strain the potato once boiled and add butter and anchovy in it. Grill the marinated lamb and cook it at 180°C for 10 minutes until medium done. Once cooked, allow the lamb to rest for two minutes and plate along with new potato and anchovy butter.

WINTER BABY CARROT AND PUY LENTIL SOUP (WINTER)

Inside-outside:

250 Gms Baby Carrots
75 Gms Puy Lentils
10 Gms Red Onion
5 Gms Celery
5 Gms Leeks
3 Gms Garlic
15 Gms Cumin
8 Gms Parsley
50 Ml Extra Virgin Olive Oil
10 Gms Greek Yoghurt
Sea Salt, to Taste
Crush Black Pepper, to Taste
300 Ml Vegetable Stock

The art of making:

Soak the lentils overnight in

warm water and salt so it can be cooked easily. In a medium saucepan, add olive oil and sauté the vegetables in it until translucent for five minutes. Add chopped baby carrot and soaked lentils in it. Cook for five more minutes. Add vegetable stock and simmer for twenty minutes. Stir in chopped parsley, cumin powder, salt, pepper and blend in motor pestle. Once pureed, strain it and garnish with Greek yoghurt. Drizzle over some extra virgin olive oil.





SALMON EN PAPILLOTE (SUMMER)

Inside-outside:

180 Gms Salmon Steak
30 Gms Fennel
20 Gms Vine Tomatoes
10 Gms Tagiascche Olives
30 Ml Olive Oil
1spring Thyme
50 Ml Rosso Conero
2 Italian Lemon
Salt, to Taste

Crush Black Pepper, to Taste

The art of making:

Marinate the salmon steak with olive oil, chopped thyme, pepper and lemon zest, and allow it to marinate

for fifteen minutes. Place the slices of fennel bulb, vine tomatoes and Tagiascche olive on a parchment paper and drizzle Rosso Conero. Place the marinated salmon on the above ingredients and fold the parchment paper in the shape of a bag. Bake the salmon in oven at 200°C for fifteen minutes. Once cooked, slit the top of the parchment paper and add julienne fennel bulb on top of baked salmon. Serve with the drizzle of olive oil.

CHESTNUT RISOTTO (AUTUMN)

Inside-outside:

200 Gms Arborio Risotto Rice
10 Gms Red Onion
5 Gms Celery
100 Gms Chestnut
50 Ml Brandy
75 Gms Unsalted Butter
100 Gms Cheese Parmesan
Salt, to Taste
Crush Black Pepper, to Taste
1 Spring Rosemary
15 Ml Olive Oil
800 Ml Vegetable Stock

The art of making:

Soften the chopped onion, celery and rosemary in olive oil. Add the risotto rice and cook for five more minutes. Bring the stock to simmer. In another pan, add the rice and cook for fifteen minutes until rice absorbs the stock and looks starchy. When the stock is added to the rice, add chestnut and brandy. Cook for two minutes. Beat in some butter, parmesan, salt and pepper. Drizzle some olive oil, grated parmesan, toasted chestnuts. Serve hot.





AN EXPERIENCE TO RELISH

The Alila Diwa Resort in South Goa is the perfect destination to have an 'evening to remember' with its two iconic hospitality offerings — The Courtyard Bar and Spice Studio Restaurant.

| By **RAHULPAUL** |



South Goa had always been the go to place for the peace seeking travellers and Alila Diwa Resort has got just that. Away from city hush bush the resort offers the best of both natural beauty with proximity to the beach and farms and also modern amenities in its luxurious suites, spas, gardens, pools and themed restaurants.

The experience here is best enjoyed with beach walks, relaxing spas and delectable food at their multi-cuisine restaurants – Bistro and Vivo.

As the sun sets down, dim lights lit the whole ambience and live music in the courtyard adds to the beauty of the place. For amplifying the experience, the resort has launched the Courtyard Bar – a state-of-the-art bar with unique experimental cocktails. The place offers a unique taste of Indian local spices mixed into your favourite cocktails prepared through visually engaging processes.

We witnesses our first cocktail ‘Cherrywood Smoked Manhattan’ being prepared through a two glass jar setup where one with the kokum infused Martini Rosso is heated and the smoke from it is infused with herbs like Angostura Bitters and cherrywood smoke in the other bottle which in turn makes the drink. The drink surpassed our expectations and kokum with Martini is definitely a match made in heaven. What a refreshing start! Our expectations were heightened.

Our next drink was ‘Dhungar Negroni’. The Negroni is indeed the famous combo of Campari, Vermouth and Gin based drink. This one had his ingredients crushed in a bowl and a lit magic coal to inflame the whole. The drink glass is put alongside the fuming ingredients and then the whole setup is covered with an overhead glass vessel for the fumes to get mixed with the drink. The whole process is as picturesque as it sounds. We took this drink outside in the courtyard and sat on the stair where padded cushions were already placed. As we listened to some live music, some finger-licking Goan delicacies were served. But we didn’t get filled on them because our dinner was about to start at the Spice Studio restaurant.

This newly renovated traditional Goan restaurant is already a known name in South Goa and boasts of a huge numbers of loyal guests. At the entrance you’d see an old school cup-board showcasing many different assorted spices and herbs in small glass bottles. All these herbs are





used in the preparations of food inside. In the centre of the place lies a big tree which represents the old time houses that would have similar structure as place of worship. The next thing that we noticed was how all the furniture were different from each other as they all were restored from different parts of Goa to add to the homely feeling of the space. We chose a table among many options of round and rectangle tables and even chose the chairs that we liked the most, an experience for the first time.

The first thing to arrive on table wasn't a dish but a Maharaja Pickles tray that has different varieties of pickle that keep on changing regularly so be ready to be surprised. The cocktails here were completely desi and though we had a good amount of liquor from the Bar, we couldn't help but try their Twisted Guava Cheeses paired with Feni which tasted as good as its ingredients.

For starters we highly recommend you try their 'Galina Til Chicken' which is oil fried juicy chicken with sesame seeds. For the vegetarians, the 'Thelcha Paneer Tikka' would be the most delicious choice. Another dish that deserves a mention is the crispy 'Singhade Ki Tikki' which can be gulped smoothly with your cocktail.





For main course, go for the Bhendi Caldin which is one of their most popular dish and should definitely reach your plate along with some Spice Studio special basmati rice. On the side you should definitely taste some 'Mushroom Ghee Roast' which adds significantly to your pallets. For meat seekers Baby Lamb Xacuti can be good addition to the plate.

Though we were extremely full now, 'Serradura' is our personal favourite sweet dish and we couldn't have missed it for anything and after tasting one spoon of the layers we were glad we didn't. Also there unique offering in this category is 'Lasoon Ki Kheer' which may not be everyone's cup of tea but brave foodies have praised the combination so we suggest that you try it too.

Overall we were pleased by the hospitality and service of Alila Diwa and would definitely be visiting here more often. Hope to see you guys there too. **S**



Rising to Stardom

It is not easy to create a name for oneself in the film industry. *Society* interacts with rising star Ali Fazal regarding breaking perceptions of the industry and his on-going projects.

| By VANI KRISHNAN |

Not all can make it and mark their name to be remembered in this competitive film industry. It requires exceptional skill and natural talent to create your own space. Ali Fazal after completing a decade in the industry can be stated to be amongst those few. This Lucknow lad with no film background initially pursued economics before taking an interest in films. His passion for theatre in his early teen days saw him play *Trinculo* in William's Shakespeare's *Tempest*. In his second year at college, acclaimed filmmaker Saeed Akhtar took notice of him in a play and chose him for a movie *Ek Tho Chance* in 2009. But it being shelved, Fazal made his

Bollywood debut in the award-winning film *Three Idiots* in the same year. "Initially I was at a stage where you obviously want to choose the right films because you're new. It was *Three Idiots* and the role was good. I had no idea Aamir (Khan) *Bhai* was a part of it. I just knew Raju sir (Rajkumar Hirani) called and my big issue was that he told me to use my own shirt, the one I was wearing when I met him. My issue was that a hole had to be made in the shirt for the harness because I'm hanging in the film," laughed Fazal.

A career in Bollywood along with stardom also means doing films you dislike in initial stages. "There are films that I just did. I had no choice. A lot of people will not accept

it but I think someone who says he doesn't have regrets is clearly lying especially an actor. But two to three films that I did were down right just bad choices," revealed a brutally honest Fazal.

But we can see the actor has been a part of a good mix of both Hollywood and Bollywood. After debuting in Hollywood with a commercially flop film *The Other End of Line*, Fazal received a good break through the hit film *Fast and Furious 7*. "The *Fast and Furious* cameo was a big step into Hollywood. That was a conscious choice somewhere," he agreed.

After such a bumpy career start, shuffling between Hollywood and

Bollywood, Fazal proceeded to do the film *Fukrey*. Directed by Mrighdeep Singh, the young actor played the struggling musician Zafar in this sleeper hit of 2013. Though his character wasn't appreciated by some, he considered it to be one of his best decisions. "I left *Fukrey* when I first got it. I wasn't very sure about it. It was a very serious and subtle role. My first suggestion was to cut all the dialogues because I felt I could have been more impactful if I was mute. It turned out to be such a nice film. I gained a lot of friends from there who I know will be there for the rest of my life for sure. That hardly happens because you become friendly on the set, you finish and move on. That's life and it's interesting," elaborated Fazal.

Though his debut film was *3 Idiots*, Fazal considers his break-through to be *Always Kabhi Kabhi* produced by Shah Rukh Khan's Red Chillies Entertainment in 2011. "And after one and a half to two years of filming, it just crashed at the box office. It just came and went. So for the first time it registered to me that 'Oh, this also happens'," laughed Fazal. "I was

literally like a kid wondering that it was so big. Since then I knew this was the lowest you can go."

But if you have noticed the kind of roles Fazal has done till date, they have not been popular but very distinct ones comparing the cliché. For every actor it is different as some might be excited by the role while others by the cast. But for Fazal none of those play the decisive card in choosing any film. "Honestly it is the script and I follow it," he revealed "If it excites me, then I go for it. There was a small web show that I did for YashRaj called *Band Baaja Baarat*. Nobody knew what a web series was that time. I took a chance and it was well-received. *Mirzapur* was three and a half films of commitment because we shot it like a film and it was like shooting three to four films together."

He was advised by many to not do it as web series would take at least five years to arrive in India. But Fazal went by his instincts. "I liked the script and knew I could do justice to the part. Nobody knew me in a well way during those times. So it was challenging for me. I wouldn't cast me

in this part if I was a producer so I took a chance." It was a chance well taken.

The sad reality is that though the script should get its rightful importance, some in the industry don't realise it. Rightly quoted to be 'delusional' by Karan Johar, actors demand high fees after attaining the credibility to be lucrative at the first show in the film industry. Even though the script is the essence, due to this phenomenon the screen writers get paid comparatively less. On asking about his views on what Johar said, Fazal very intelligently adds, "Honestly I don't know about the remuneration process because I am not that into everybody else's matters. But I know for sure that the writer should be paid. They should be paid the highest because somewhere along the way we lost it. It was there till Salim Javed. They were in fact very well-respected and given the deserved budget for their writing. We lost it after that. When he (the writer) comes, everybody will understand where to level themselves. Now the actors are on the pedestal so everything goes down from there. That has to change."

This applies to his current web series *Mirzapur* as well. "The script was great and that's really essential. I have always tried to stick by it. Everyone is looking at content. Content is king and I have seen it this last year. I'm so happy that my colleagues' films like *Stree*, *Andhadun* and *Badhaai Ho* are skyrocketing. Because of that we will get good content to work on," Fazal replies.

Apart from the script, another significant aspect actors look at while choosing a film is their co-star. When asked how important does he mark it to be, the 31-year-old actor replied otherwise. "No, I look at how it's presented," asserted Fazal. "You're made to look like that because if nobody sees it what's the point? We all do it for the art and the process. But at the end of the day we all need validation. No matter where you are. Even if it is somebody in your personal life, you need that validation. It's nice when

A still from *Mirzapur*





A still from *Victoria and Abdul*

you are a part of something. Apart from the challenges of acting, when it becomes too predictable, I don't want to do it."

Talking about co-stars the actor has a small soft spot for Judi Dench, his co-star from the movie *Victoria and Abdul*. "She's a kid," he laughed. "It doesn't feel like she's 82 years old. She's a shopaholic and also taught me how to eat scones. She's very sweet. She has a great sense of humour and I think that's why we got along. It's so important to have that!"

His performance in *Victoria and Abdul* brought him a considerable break-through again in Hollywood. The movie revolved around the Queen Victoria's relationship with her Indian munshi Abdul Karim. Not just Fazal, it made some of us look at history in a different way as well. "Yes, totally. His family (Abdul's) was so scared. For the longest time, they were made to believe that they were a *dhabba* on the face of this nation. This was because Abdul Karim was siding with Queen Victoria. That time we were under a different rule. You're under a particular government. If you have

a government job, and ten years later that government is gone, you won't be called a traitor. He was working under her and they became so close that it turned into a very spiritual relationship. Of course, Stephen called it as a very light film. But disturbing things had happened. It was a fifteen year old relationship," explains Fazal.

Then were the differences in histories the reason why the film did not screen for a longer number of days. Not just *Victoria and Abdul* but many other movies too received very little screen time. Fazal elaborates this to be a differences in audience. "Though it was made for 20 million, it made 95 million across the globe. But it ran for only six days in India. It's so funny because it is the same for all the focus feature films that is Daniel Day-Lewis's *Phantom Thread*, Garry Oldman's *Darkest Hour*, and *Victoria and Abdul*. We used to travel together. When those films released in India, it ran for one week. But we have an *Avengers* and *Fast and Furious* audience. I think these are the things you want to watch in the television. It wasn't publicized here that much. I

think they knew about the market here. They knew that in India only this much is possible and we'll do just that much. We literally had nothing, so from that we gathered the momentum."

While that is true, India has changed a lot in terms of market over the last few years. This is applicable in the case of web series. Though through the number of web series it is clear that it has gathered the current momentum, some part of the Indian audience still perceive it to be a little derogatory compared to movies. "They have to stop because every production house is literally working on at least five web series right now. I can guarantee you that and it is not just Amazon and Netflix. I'm saying no because I have got film commitments. Of course the celluloid has its own charm and that's my first love and I would obviously leap onto that first and then look at a web show. But this is a game changer. In fact we have a reference point. Exactly three to four years ago back this has happened in Hollywood. The businesses went down and I told someone the other day that the only films that work are your superhero films and franchises. I think there is room for everyone today. I just finished directing a short film and for the first time I've got my hands dirty. I have respect for directors and producers. I think the actors have it too easy. It's a ten to twelve minutes piece called as *Arthuru part one*. It's an excerpt from the life of a strange man," revealed the very excited Fazal.

Interestingly he mentions that in Hollywood, only two actors, Denzel Washington and Matt Damon, can sell any film on their own steam and without resorting to any superhero movies or any franchise. The rest are just not that big to sell their independent films on their own.

Ali Fazal can be called an icon rising to stardom. From challenging popular perceptions to taking distinctive work, he has proved to be just more than just good face. We wait to see such actors emerge in the future! 



The

D

COMPANY

Danish Sait is a master of quite a few trades - emceeing, being a radio host, a comic, a speaker and an actor. He shares with *Society* his story towards handling every career aspect with aplomb and enjoying the varied aspects offered to him.

| By **SAPNA SARFARE** |

Young names in India are now getting more opportunities to be original and offer something different to the masses. Amongst the names to create a niche for himself is Danish Sait. An emcee, radio host, comic, speaker and actor, he is popular in each of these fields.

Each of Danish's career options happened to him in a process and are intertwined. "I used to do a lot of mall events. Bangalore Central used to be a hub and this was new to Bangalore. Garuda Mall and Forum Mall was where I started doing little shows and promotions on the road and many years later, ended up joining a radio station in Bahrain," he revealed. "My cousin happened to know somebody who owned a radio station there. She connected me with them and when I came back, I was doing Radio in Bangalore. The nature of my content was funny. I was doing prank calls. So, the nature of progression around then was to do comedy so I ended up joining an improv team. I didn't really dabble with stand-up because somehow I've believed that I don't have the skills to do that."

He progressed to being a speaker in schools and colleges. "10 years into this career I had to move to the next gradual space which was films. And on radio I had created the identities with different voices and characters, one of those was Nograj. So, I sat down and wrote a film with a friend of mine. It was always the part of the dream to see myself on 70MM and it happened! We ended up making a film and thus began my acting career. I think in terms of process very clearly if you see it's almost the case of cementing one place and then moving to the other. Only when you work and only when you put time out in the sun do you start seeing results, before that it's impossible."

Each of his career choices has influenced the other. "I was doing these prank calls and there is a lot of improvisation right because you don't know what the caller on the other side is going to say but you got to have a rebuttal ready. I didn't even know it was called improvisation or there could

be comedy form called the improv when I started and then I went New York to study improv. I just understood the science behind keeping a conversation alive. And when I started following that it really started helping me with different spheres. Even as an actor, lot of directors today like the idea of somebody who can improvise on set, come up with ideas, thinks still in direction of the story and the scene that they're written."

He very rightly calls it work of patience and perseverance which is required even in movies. "Acting is only for three or four minutes but the game that goes on before that is the tougher part and I think as a person I've become a lot more patient. I worked in an organization when I was doing Radio Fever 104 FM and I think working in an organization gives your perspective in terms of adjusting and learning how to work with different people. You know two people doing a scene you have got to make the other person look good, you have got to make the scene look good; the eventual products matter more than how much I end up shining. I used to write when I was on radio and I realized now even film writing is helpful. I play different characters on radio. I play different characters at improv and all of these come handy when I'm doing films as well because I get to play a different character. I'm thinking on my feet, I'm working with the other actors and the director, so I think this is helpful."

The Danish Sait that we see today is a combination of quite a few things. The first one is his prank calls. "I have about 40 million plays on SoundCloud and I like to believe that these calls have been heard by most people in urban towns through the smartphones at some point. Of course, the language is a barrier, but I think people get premise and context very well. The second thing would be the *RCB Insider*, when I travelled for four years with RCB team as Mr Nags wearing a headband, a funny moustache and a wig, interviewing RCB players. It was very normal and new at

that point because no one was really doing content like this with cricket players. It was interesting to see someone as Virat Kohli or AB de Villiers step out of their comfort zone and be a part of this uncomfortable quirky mad character set-up. I also think, the film was well-received and not just in Karnataka or on the internet, but thanks to Amazon Prime it reached out to more people. Many people started realising it is a political satire. It is a new attempt. I think these three are very notable."



A still from *Humble Politician Nograj*

Danish is a popular radio host especially with his calls. He has had people ask him if these calls are staged which he refutes. “In terms on how I work them is very simple. I solicit on the radio, emails and social media. People send me requests. A person of a certain intellect would ask why would someone fall for these prank calls? But what they don’t realise is that there is a billion people in the country and it’s not hard to get anyone on the line. I don’t think I’m that popular where everyone knows me. Once I have the request, I call the person who placed the request. I try to find out key and personal information about the person whom they want me to prank. Once I get it, I make two-three story boards. I can sense where the story might go. Sometimes you just have to rubbish all of it and just go with the flow on the phone call.”

Of course, some calls have backfired. “I called a politician’s son once and it was incredible. He got back with a threat and so on. Obviously I had to take the call done. Later, he became cool with it and we laughed on it. I think the other fun prank call was with a network provider, without mentioning it they had a campaign where their network would come in the hills and the mountains. So, I did a call where I called somebody, and said I’m calling from so and so network you’ve placed a request or complain saying that your network doesn’t work. You can’t be in your house; you have to go to a jungle then only your network will work. This network provider sent an email through a big media agency saying that they want me taken off the job or they wouldn’t give business to our radio station. I am very grateful to my radio network for sticking with me. They said it’s not fair, we will remove the call. They spoke to me and I had to take the call down. I was very reluctant but had to. So yeah that’s what you learn right when you do something like this. There are some people in the country that take themselves more seriously than they should.”

The concept of Danish’s Kannada movie *Humble Politician Nograj* came through one of his radio prank call characters called Nograj. “He was a quintessential Kanadika from one of the areas of Bangalore. Most politicians in our state do sound like that. The idea was to do something innovative and make a film. I’ve been a huge fan of Seth MacFarlane and Sacha Baron Cohen growing up. When you have inspiration like this, the natural progression is to go down that root.”

He did have filmy aspirations but was never offered one. “So we (he and his friend) decided to write it down by ourselves and make the film. We had a script that was ready. It took us three meetings with three different producers to have a producer finalised and boom, the movie was ready. It wasn’t really that much of a struggle to get the project flying. Mine was a lot simpler but that’s because I put in a lot of work in the years that went. I think the audience was waiting for it. Testimony to that is the fact that, when the release happened first day first show to hear the whistle when I got on screen was incredible. The movie did



extremely well. I was on every publication’s Best Debutant list which is a good feeling. I’m very humbled and glad that this voice turned into a film.”

While the movie has a base in Karnataka politics, Danish does feel it connects with an Indian anywhere. “Politicians all have the same problems. The only thing that doesn’t put us together on the same page is the language but everything else does. Recently the Karnataka elections that happened with resort politics, the country followed it. It was more interesting than a T20 match. The country followed the entire scenario unfold, everyone wanted to know who will form the government. Parties are labels but the people behind it are all the same. We have the same political structure in our country. Yeah, some jokes are local, and people wouldn’t be able to infer them. I don’t think there is much difference between the North and South politics. We have learned a lot from the content when we watch other films as well. Now we are working on a series format and it will be for everyone not just India. Slowly but surely, we will learn how to keep it more generic and in terms of language, jokes, humour not in terms of political fabric.”

Danish personally enjoys doing improv as the idea of suspense on stage is incredible for him. “I just did a tour recently around the country and it was amazing to see people come out and support us in huge numbers. We do have an audience that’s hungry and want to watch and follow and they do come out to support you in big numbers. In terms of subjects you can’t touch up on everything because different things offend different people and I’m not somebody who believes everybody should be on the same page. I think what’s really cool about India is how complex it is. We have different people from different states speaking different languages, from different faiths, religions and it’s about binding them together with one common thread. Now you got to work towards finding that common thread.”

But he wants comedians as performers to be mature enough to cater to a broader spectrum. “I think only time will make us all better. The audience has a right to be offended, to not be happy with what we do because they pay money and come in; obviously you can’t perform for each person individually. I just think that wherein once you hit a format and once you hit a thought wherein everybody’s going to be involved on the same page I’m sure things will fall in place. So I think it’s a very fine balance that we need and we got to learn how to work around these complexities that exist around us so I think it’s two folds all of us need to mature. There needs to be more awareness of comics and people and what they do and I think comics need to be aware of whom are they talking to really.”

Talking about fellow comics, Danish finds his friend Biswa Kalyan Rath witty and funny. “I also like Kanan, a friend from Bangalore. I really like his last special and I’m really looking forward for his next one. Zakir and I know each other from radio days; he used to be the producer in Delhi and I used to be the producer in Bangalore. And to see Zakir bloom to become this monster of a comedian is just amazing. I also like Vir Das. I feel he has sort of really broken the shackles and gone far beyond and still has a huge horizon that needs to paint. He’s brilliant. I also like Abish. I remember many years ago when I was doing radio there. I wanted to make a website, and somebody told me about him. I think I have been following him over seven years now. I think he is one of the most talented people this country has.”

If you still are unaware, actress Kubra Sait of *Sacred Games* fame is his older sister. “Kubra and I share a very, very close bond. It can be personal or professional. We do engage in a lot of conversations. I was in the public eye before her thanks to radio. But then I still remember when *Sacred Games* released on July 6th, I spoke with her on the 5th night. And I know my sister. She’s ranged her hopes earlier on different projects and

unfortunately little happened but the damage was not as big as what *Sacred Games* has done. It’s really, really made a big impact. We enjoy each other’s success but we like keeping it real. We are really grounded kids. I think the real binding factor amongst us is mom. Even till date if I’m shooting for a film and it’s the first day or second day, mum will come or Kubra will call and wish me luck or I’ll call her and wish her luck. You won’t believe it even now when *Sacred Games* released and when a couple of big actors or actresses or directors wrote to her saying she’s very good, a lot of people outside think it’s a very normal thing. But for us it’s still a big deal, like recently to attend Deepika and Ranveer’s reception in Bombay. For us it was such a huge deal. I think that’s what makes us so amazing. The fact that professionally you know your career grows, you have more opportunities, that’s what career growth is. Your bank account can change but not you as a person. That’s the basic DNA and the heart of it we are very simple middle-class kids who are enjoying everything that’s happening around us but the focus was is and will always be to do good work.”

One feels handling so many different things together can be tough on his energy and creativity level. But Danish is not complaining. “In terms of energy and creative levels, I’m somebody who cannot be switched off. I’m always ready to work. I’m always ready to contribute. I enjoy doing what I do. For me it’s a trance it just takes me to another level and also if you look, these are things that I did as a child as well. I went to a boarding school where I did theatre. I did comedy on stage. I sang in the choir. I was the Head Boy. I was pretty decent with academics as well. I used to imitate the teacher and you see today I’m still doing the same stuff. I’m still having fun. I’m still making people laugh. I’m still sort of performing not just on stage but in front of the camera as well. So it’s an extension of me and I don’t think I’ll get tired of being me because I love me



and I don’t know how people around me put up with me. I hope they like me.”

Danish is currently shooting for a show called *Afsos* directed by Anubhuti Kashyap. “It’s funny because her brother Anurag directed my sister in *Sacred Games* and now I get to work with his sister. I’m working on an untitled film produced by one of south India’s biggest names Puneet Rajkumar. I’m also working on another film *Ramana Avatara* with two other young and vibrant names in the south. One of them is Raj Shetty and other is Rishi. I have a film that’s up for release called *Sold* where I’ll be playing a cop and it’s the first time where I’ll be doing something serious. I have *Cricbuzz*, a regular feature till the 2019 World Cup. I’m shooting a show with them called *Stranger Eleven*.” There are some digital improve shows too.

Danish Sait is raring to go and we are as excited to see him perform better than his best. **S**

10 Disruptive Nutrition Tips for 2019

THE AGE of personal nutrition is here; till last year and years before researchers, doctors and dieticians were looking at same solutions for all patients. Everyone thought the one-size fits all is working because nobody is complaining or even remotely understanding its effect on us. No fingerprint is the same, similarly no human body is the same nor are the solutions. The development of personal nutrition should be considered so we have Ten Nutrition Disrupters lined up for you.

ONE SIZE FITS ALL – ONE DIET BENEFITS ALL
Every human is born with a different finger print; how can one diet plan seem to benefit all? The consumer is no way buying into this. He/she is clever and well-read to demand bio-individuality and personalized nutrition plans based on the missing elements that need to be integrated all together. Like a puzzle can't be complete if a few pieces are missing.

IT'S NOT ABOUT NOS ANYMORE – REACH OUT TO A MORE YES-YES

Approach a nutritionist than someone who uses NO in her attitude more than required. No Sugar, No Junk or No Cheat Meals can't be sustained for very long or for life. Accept the fact that these comfort foods are allowed when on holidays, celebrations or in stressful situations at times. We are more human than we think we are.

Let's accept it, acknowledge it and own it, once a way we need to binge to feel human and not robotic or plastic. Even athletes and celebrities all binge; if you ever checked out The Rocks Instagram account and his cheat meals of sushi trails or his pancake mountains it makes him look and feel more real. So, make sure there are more yes's than no's.



HEALTH IS NOT ONLY ABOUT FOOD

Mental wellness is also a part of health and wellness. Not tapping into what bothers you internally and only focusing your energy on what is next on my plate is missing the point quite entirely. Emotions drive everything, what you would like to eat, wear or how you want to behave. A bad mood can throw you off a healthy plan, but a happy mood can make you

VEGAN DIET WILL HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT

Vegan diet is super popular these days; most people turn vegan to lose weight, very few for ethical, environmental or health reasons. The one's who doing it for faddish reasons are at the receiving end of the diet, excess weight gain and nutrient deficient, although there are various health benefits like a trimmer waistline, and improved blood sugar control. So, be careful why you pick the diet. Don't do because it's trending; do it cause it's working for you not against you.

BUY EXPENSIVE, EXPENSIVE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES TO LOSE WEIGHT

Our ancestors remained slim and fit

raised and the only conversation at all parties is who supplies Keto deserts and meals. Anyone claiming they do or adding keto to their social media is being sort after and everyone is ready to hire them. A diet is the kinds of foods a person, community and animal eat traditionally, naturally and locally and not follows a particular diet.

SWEET VEGETABLES SHOULD NOT BE CONSUMED

All eyes are raised when I suggest these for a salad plate, easy and effective salads. Every dietician has advised against these, but I recommend them to all my clients including diabetics so that they crave less sugar and these starchy

eat the healthy stuff! If you thought otherwise, think again, be mindful and try to understand your moods deeply.

I CAN WORK OUT AND EAT ANYTHING I WANT

Well that's absolutely disappointing when you don't see the weighing scale move lower at all. You can be a gym rat, but if you ate more calories than what you burnt the scale will go up no matter what form of workouts you are unto. So, nutrition is key to losing those pounds and not the other way around.

SALADS HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT

Salads do help us lose weight, as fibre is low in calories and keeps us feeling full for hours. But if that salad has a dressing loaded with sugar, unhealthy fats or too many dried fruits it's not a healthy salad anymore. It might be a dish of 800-1000 calories cause of the sugary dressing and unhealthy fats. So beware of the dressings, pick a balsamic vinegar or olive oil dressing along with cruciferous green leaves. Cucumber alone is not a salad!



even till they were 80. All they ate were seasonal and local fruits and vegetables. They never spent on expensive international produce!

They typically ate a healthy eating plate regularly and experimented with herbs and spice all their lives. The good fats, protein carbohydrate combined meals. Everyone ate together and chatted about how the day was spent compared to the new age modern humans with head buried in their phones that cost an arm and a leg.

TRYING DIFFERENT FAD DIETS WILL HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT

The Keto craze is the best example of fad diets. It's got cholesterol

fruits and vegetables help the bacteria to multiply and feed the gut well. So, my darlings, please go ahead and feed your gut.

SPARKLING WATER IS COOLER TO DRINK THAN REGULAR WATER

Drinking sparkling water can lead to gas and indigestion of the foods water along with it. Drinking water from the plastic bottle is not a great idea as the toxicity of plastic could lead to fake estrogens being absorbed by the body. The cool factor would be to drink water with some lemon slices in it.

—Payal Kothari, Integrative and Functional Nutritionist

IN YOUR home and right there on the kitchen shelf is one of the most powerful natural moisturizer: Honey! Actually, honey attracts moisture to the skin from the atmosphere. In fact, it is one of the most versatile natural products. It contains several vitamins and minerals, like Vitamins B and C, calcium, iron, potassium, sodium, as well as amino acids and enzymes.

As far as skin care is concerned, it has been used as a beauty aid for centuries. According to ancient records and texts available, honey was applied on the skin to soothe and heal injuries and burns. It was also used to treat many skin conditions like eczema and dermatitis.

Modern scientific research has, in fact, revealed its various healing benefits in external applications, including its antibacterial and antiseptic properties. It has antioxidant properties too and helps to delay the visible signs of ageing on the skin if used regularly.

All these properties of honey make it an ideal natural cosmetic ingredient.

For one thing, it suits all

HONEY,
JUST

skin types. It draws moisture to the skin and even improves the skin's natural ability to retain moisture. In other words, it helps to seal in moisture and thus hydrate the skin powerfully. It relieves dryness, even in extremely dry and dehydrated skins, making the skin soft and smooth. As it contains valuable vitamins, minerals and enzymes, it nourishes the



MOISTURISE

skin when externally applied. It also stimulates, tones and tightens the skin, giving it a fresh and radiant glow.

- If you have dry skin, apply honey daily and wash it off with plain water after 20 minutes. You can also mix

honey with a few drops of orange juice. Apply this on the face for 20 minutes and wash off with water.

- For dry skin, you can also mix half a teaspoon honey, one teaspoon rose water and one teaspoon dried milk powder. Mix into

a paste and apply on the face. You can remove after 20 minutes with water.

- Add one-quarter cup of honey to your bath water to relieve dryness and soften the skin on the body.

- Honey suits both oily and combination skin too.

- For oily skin, mix honey with egg white and lemon juice. Apply on the skin daily, washing it off after 20 minutes with plain water. Egg white and lemon have a cleansing effect, reducing oiliness, while honey will soften the skin and nourish it. If you have a combination skin, apply honey by itself on the entire face, as it would suit both oily and dry areas.

- With its antiseptic and healing properties, honey can also be used on pimple-prone skins and even if there is a severe acne condition. In fact, people with acne often suffer from superficial dryness and flaking of the skin. Honey would be ideal.

Mix one teaspoon honey with yoghurt (curd) and apply on the face. Wash it off after 15 minutes with plenty of water. It would relieve dryness and also soothe and nourish the skin. Both honey and yoghurt have a healing effect on acne. Honey can be useful in face masks, for all skin types. Mix wheat bran (choker) or oatmeal with honey. Rose water can be also be added. Mix into a smooth paste and apply on the face. Wash off when it is dry or after 20 minutes. This mask may be used two or three times a week to keep the skin soft, supple and youthful.

Today, honey is an important ingredient in the formulation of products for beauty care from moisturizers, skin toners and masks, to hand creams, body lotions and hair conditioners. This most versatile beauty aid is actually within easy reach in your home on your kitchen shelf. It provides a safety factor, which is a decided advantage. It does not contain preservatives, artificial fragrances, colour or essences. In other words, it is totally natural, in every sense of the word. So make the most of it!

—Shahnaz Husain, CMD,
Shahnaz Husain Group.

THE BASICS of biology and anatomy teach us that protein is the building block of our body. Along with carbohydrates and fats, protein is the most important macro-nutrient. The Indian Council for Medical Research recommends between 50-70 g of protein per day as the recommended daily allowance. We need adequate amounts of protein to enable our body to perform several functions. Unfortunately, according to a survey, nine out of ten Indians have a diet that's deficient in proteins. This is due to both, access to a diet with sufficient protein as well as several myths around protein.

Milk is one of the important sources of protein suitable for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians. Whey is an important constituent of milk and along with casein makes up the two proteins found in milk. It is a complete protein that contains all essential amino acids, has the best biological value that is once consumed and is easily absorbed to be utilized by the muscles. There are several benefits of whey protein consumption for all ages. Mother's milk contains a high percentage of whey protein which is why whey remains the ideal source for children for healthy growth. In adults, whey builds lean muscle mass and for the older population. It prevents age related sarcopenia. Whey proteins are



It's
Whey
Important

also popular supplements for those looking to lose weight and gain muscle. They're an effective tool for women looking to lose fat, tone up and improve strength. Many women think that it will make them bulky and they will develop features like the men or look like them. However, whey protein is an excellent source of protein and can aid in weight loss because women do not have the hormones that encourage the growth of large, bulky muscles like men. Whey protein helps women in getting an overall toned look rather than ripped muscles. Whey protein helps in reducing fat, promotes lean growth and minimizes cravings for sugary food. In fact, when you are trying to reduce calories, a female actually needs more protein to maintain her weight and speed up the weight loss process.

Women tend to not consume enough protein in their daily diets. There are many health risks for women who do not consume enough protein on a regular basis. Such as:

- Increased risk of developing osteoporosis
- Slow metabolism
- Obesity

- Thinning of the hair
- Fragile fingernails and toenails

Also, those women who do not get enough protein in their diet tend to feel more tired and in some cases eat more calories in high carbohydrate foods to compensate for this lack of energy.

The consumption of whey is currently restricted to physically active fitness enthusiasts and hardcore bodybuilders. The misconception prevalent is that whey is not suitable for an average individual with sedentary lifestyle. Several other myths on whey include:

- Whey is not natural. This could not be further from the truth. Whey is nothing but milk that has been filtered to remove unwanted components such as fat and lactose. It follows a similar process that we follow at home every day to remove impurities from water!!
- People think they do not need whey protein since they are not physically active. They tend to think it is those hulky muscular guys who need to take those. With severe protein deficiency abundant in the majority of the population, there could be no better complete protein

source than whey to supplement the inadequacy.

● Whey contains steroids and that is the reason those gym hulks go for it to flex their muscles and show off.

● Women think that consuming whey protein will make them bulky. They will develop features like the men and will look like them. Like Really?

The benefits of whey protein are immense and include:

- Increases muscle content in the body
- Helps in weight loss
- Improves hair condition
- Keeps your immunity strong
- Keeps the skin and nails in good condition
- Improves metabolism, maintains high energy levels and reduces fatigue
- Helps to focus and negates mood swings
- Reduces bone and joint pain
- Keeps blood sugar in check
- Aids in faster wound healing
- Helps in sleeping well

Of late, however, the perception is gradually beginning to change. Whey is going more mainstream now with several reputed FMCG companies also introducing products with whey protein as the primary ingredient. Currently most of the whey protein raw material in India is imported but with India being the largest producer of milk in the world, localised production is not far behind. With increasing levels of physical activity amongst Indians and rising health consciousness, the requirement for protein supplementation will grow beyond being restricted to a select few. Smaller trial packs, Indianised flavours and customized nutrition for the peculiarity of the Indian diet will distinguish the market leaders. The whey protein market stands at the cusp of explosive growth.

—Samit Mehta, Founder,
UTH Beverage Factory



DEMYSTIFYING Devil

| By **TANIA AMEER KHAN** |

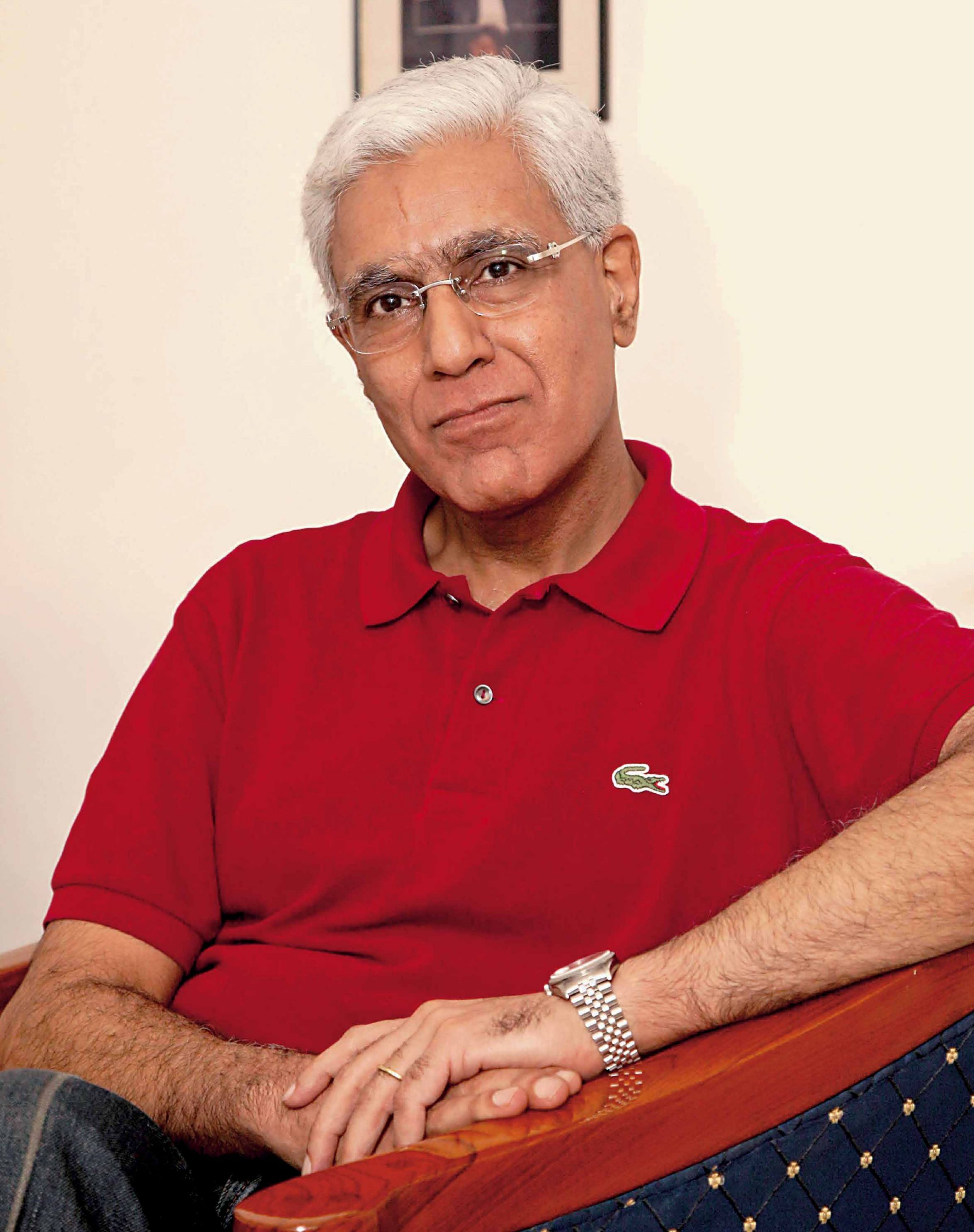
Suave and immaculate, India's most celebrated television personality, Karan Thapar, recapitulates his intriguing career. In this November 2011 interview, *Society* unravels the sharp and incisive television interviewer's soft and humble side.

Dressed casually in a tee and jeans, Karan Thapar emerged as a calm, soft-spoken and gentle person much the opposite of how we perceive him from his onscreen image. In a rather placid manner, he insisted that didn't address him as, 'Sir'. Instead, he asserted humorously, "What's wrong with Karan? I like my name, sir makes me feel as old as I look." The comfort factor sent in and the conversation with one of India's prominent journalist, turned out to be a fabulously enriching experience.

How were your early days as a journalist? How did you start your career?

I started my career in journalism probably more by accident or as an attempt to imitate what my two illustrious cousins, Romesh Thapar, editor of *Seminar* and Ashok Thapar, a senior editor with the *Times of India* had achieved. I looked up to them and found journalism to be an inviting profession that I might join.

When I was at Oxford doing research, I wrote letters to six British newspaper editors, presumptuously suggesting that I wanted to work with them. Out of the six, four didn't respond, one probably wrote back saying 'Get lost'. But the sixth — Charles Douglas Hume, the Deputy Editor as well as the Foreign Editor at *The Times* London, called me up to say that



he'd never read such an audacious, cheeky letter and was keen on meeting me.

Few things during that lunch meeting ensured that I clinched my first job. I ordered a Scottish dish — Haggis, having no idea what it was. Charles asked me if I was sure and I answered in the affirmative pretending to be older than I was (I was 25 then). I almost died of shock because it was nothing but the intestines of a god damn sheep. Charles said that served me right. It did serve me right enough to ensure that he'd never forget me. He mentioned someone from India was visiting him and it happened to be my aunt Nayantara Sehgal. A combination of such factors assured my job.

Initially, I spent some time abroad. In Lagos, Nigeria. I had not been trained as a journalist as I had no experience in writing. Charles told me to file my stories to him instead of the desk. Every night, religiously, he would ring me up around 11.30 and take me through my copy, pointing out the mistakes I had committed. He was an incredible human being and my regard for him went through the roof. After three months, he called me and told me to file to the desk. Fourteen months later, as the Nigerian government was displeased with a couple of my articles and removed my accreditation. I moved back to London and joined *The Times* there.

How did your career in television journalism begin?

After my stint at Lagos, I moved back to London writing editorials for *The Times*, where I wrote a series on *British Asians*. In 1981 got a call from the *London Weekend Television* (LWT), they told me they liked my series and offered me a job. I was quite fascinated by the idea of being a television journalist as I quite like honestly like the idea of putting my face to the screen. By 1982, I took the job and stayed with LWT for the next 10 years.

By 1984, Charles, who had become the editor, got in touch with me. He asked me

to do leaders, the unsigned editorial pieces that go out as the paper's opinion. So, for the next nine years, I wrote *The Times'* opinion on India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh and so on.

How and when did you decide to move back to India?

I came back to India at the end of 1989 after my wife Nisha died of encephalitis at 33. We had decided to settle in India after having children but that never happened.

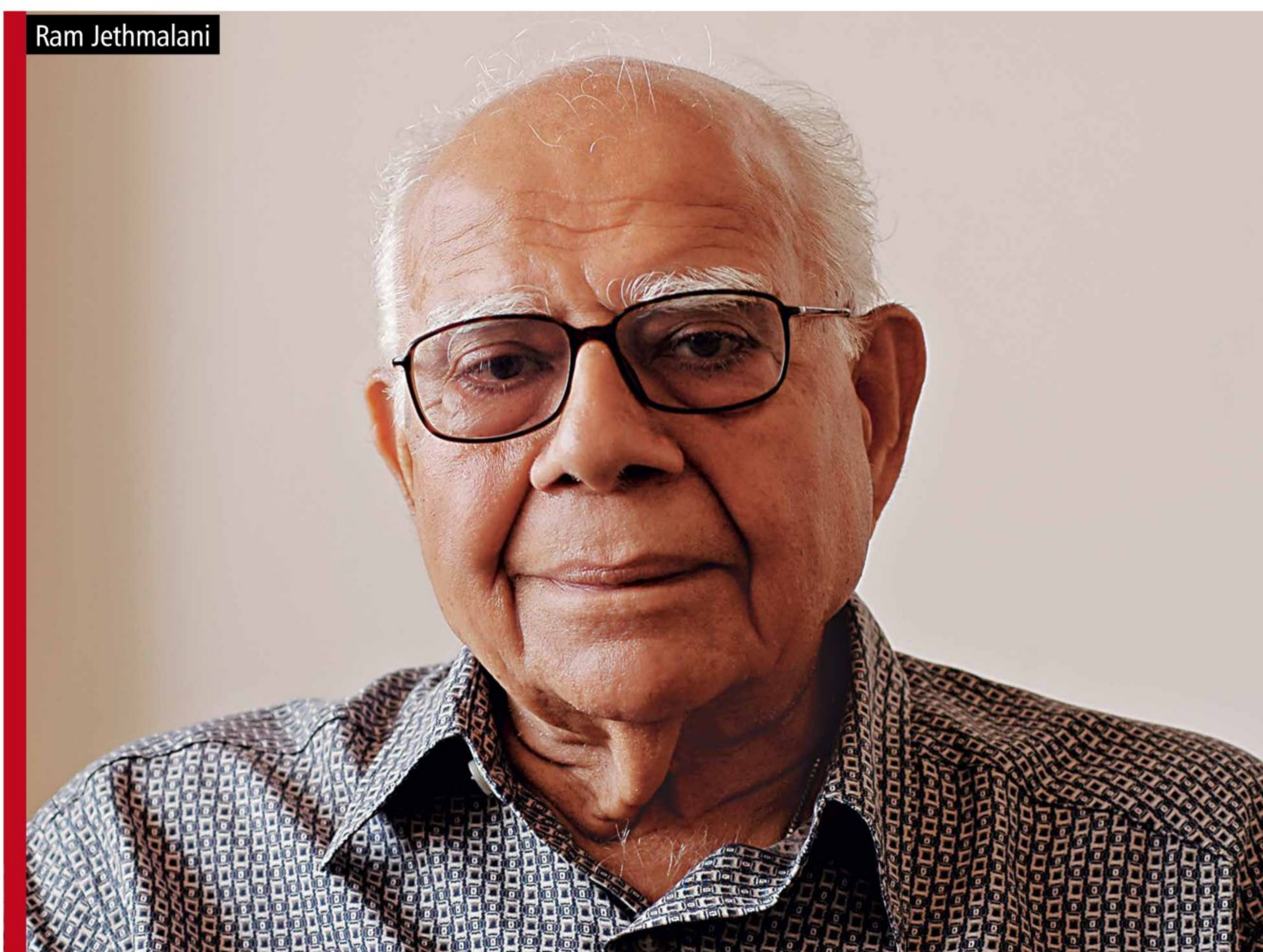
"I'd prefer to describe myself as assertive, persistent and my explanation for being so is because I feel it's my duty to get a sensible answer. It's a duty I owe to the viewers."

Rajiv Gandhi encouraged me to return to India and find a career at home. He asked me to join the Information and Broadcasting Ministry for three months and see how it goes. Sadly, after that, he lost the elections but I decided to stay on in India. In January 1995, I met Shobhana Bhartia; Shobhana and I hit it off and ran for five years. It shut down and was amalgamated into Home TV. I moved on and worked with UTV as their President for three years and then in August 2001, I decided to set up my own production house — Infotainment TV.

Tell us about the conceptualization of your extremely popular show, *Devil's Advocate*, and also your column, *Sunday Sentiments*?

Devil's Advocate took off from a show that I had done previously with the BBC called *Hard Talk India*. I was approached by Radeep Sardesai and Raghav Bahl. This coincided with the BBC rethinking their commitment to India and a year later, CNN-IBN was set up. The title was at the back of my mind, I suggested it to them and they liked it. The programme was born and it first appeared in January

Ram Jethmalani



2006 with the interview I did with General Pervez Musharraf.

My column, *Sunday Sentiments*, has been there for nearly 14 years. Shobhana, who I regard very highly, asked me to write for the *Hindustan Times* while I was with UTV. It was to be in a diary format, but eventually it evolved into a single issue piece. I had decided this wouldn't be a political column. It in fact is quirky and idiosyncratic. On television, you might see me as a tough nut but there are other sides to me reflected in this column.

You have been slated to be extremely incisive and aggressive in your questioning, sometimes being even nasty and rude. What is your response to that?

I quite like the idea that people think I'm incisive. I feel that I'm to-the-point and precise. I'm not aggressive but obviously that's a judgment a viewer makes rather than me. I'd prefer to describe myself as

"I'm always conscious of the fact that there is a human being on the other side. Even after the interview is over, I always make sure to make up and maintain that we are still friends."

assertive, persistent and my explanation for being so is because I feel it's my duty to get a sensible answer. It's a duty I owe to the viewers.

What if the guests on your show regard your persistence as personal attacks on them?

They do know I'm doing a job, but some do get upset while some feel embarrassed as their inadequacy in some way has been revealed. I'm always conscious of the fact that there is a human being on the other side. Even after the interview is over, I always make sure to make up and maintain that we are still friends.

The guests have even complained about you interrupting them even before they have completed their answers. Is that a part of your style or is it a part of extracting the best out of them?

I don't think interrupting could be a part of anyone's style. You must interrupt when it's warranted and it's only required when you realize that the person is evading the questions. You have to time your interruption

AR Rahman



very carefully. Also, all my interviews are recorded live and transmitted unedited. That is a rule we have practiced right from the days of *Hard Talk* in 1998.

What happened with Ram Jethmalani? Why did he get angry on television?

Ram Jethmalani seemed to be exploding with anger on television. I've tried to clarify that I was never questioning Ram's right to defend Manu Sharma (convicted in the Jessica Lall murder case). That is entirely a lawyer's choice. I was questioning how he was defending him. I was in the process raising the question of how this was casting aspersions on an innocent girl who is dead. Is that right or fair? Ram's reply was, this was an internationally validated technique to undermine the case for the prosecution by questioning the credentials of the defendant Ram, who is often short-tempered and irascible, began shouting and exploding, but it was not actual anger. That interview is done twice. The first time there so much



Narendra Modi

screaming and over talking. We did it again and it was worse. But, I still hugely admire Ram as he could instantly divorce his anger and asked me for a drink after it.

Tell us about the incident when Narendra Modi walked out of your show.

That interview lasted only for three and a half minutes. I told him I'd be discussing his image. I said that on the one hand, you have been declared as one of the most efficient Chief Ministers and despite that people still call you a mass murderer. Do you have any image problem? Then I pointed out that in April 2004, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court said that he was like a modern day Nero who looks the other side when helpless children and innocent women are burned. He suddenly said he wanted to have water, which I told him was next to him. He didn't want to continue and I explained to him for an hour not to do so as that would draw far more attention. I was very conscious of the tone I used. I didn't interrupt him, but I just put to him what people thought of him. He didn't agree and told me, *Mood kharab Ho Gaya Hai, Phir Se Karenge* (My mood is spoilt, we will do this later'). He said he would

call me, which he did the next day saying, *Tum mere bhai ho and I love you?* I laughed, 'But not enough to let me interview you?' Those three minutes were shown by Rajdeep every half hour in news and it attracted a lot of attention.

One person you have mentioned who refused to give you an interview has been Sushma Swaraj. Tell us why?

Till 2001, Sushma gave me interviews but she hasn't given me one for *Devil's Advocate*. I feel there's an incident behind this, but I'm sure she has a better explanation.

The reason might be that she always mistakes me to be Aroon Purie (owner and editor-in-chief of *India Today*). This happened nearly nine years back when we met at Sanjeev Goenka's home at a dinner for Benazir Bhutto. I was standing with Aroon. She walked up to Aroon and said, 'Karan Thapar, I have got it right this time.' He looked at me and said, 'No, that is Karan.' After that, she has never given me an interview. Obviously, I've offended her deeply in some way. I've written many letters suggesting that I'm sorry for whatever I've said and it was not intended.

What went wrong with Amitabh Bachchan that he didn't give you an interview for a long time?

Amitabh Bachchan got offended several years ago as a result of an interview I did for *Eyewitness* on his 50th birthday. During one of the tape changes, he told me about

Sushma Swaraj



'Does it worry you that you will be remembered as the captain who won the World Cup, the highest wicket taker and now the man who took Rs 25 lakhs? He just put his head down and started crying continuously with his eyes and nose streaming and his voice breaking till the end.'

a story about Warren Beatty interview where Warren had been questioned about the women in his life. Amitabh said that he really thought this was the right way to do things.

I thought maybe he was giving message to me to do so. When the tape was put back on, I said, 'You just told me the story about a Warren Beatty. So, can I take a leaf out of

Kapil Dev



"I don't think interrupting could be a part of anyone's style. You must interrupt when it's warranted..."

your book and ask you about the women in your life? I asked him about Rekha and Parveen Babi. He said all the reports were rubbish. Then, sitting beside him on the sofa in the shot was his wife Jaya and I asked her. 'Do you believe that?' She said she did and he immediately said, 'You are saying that because you are on camera'. It was apparent that he was extremely irritated and upset. Since then, despite my attempts to apologise and atone for it, he has never forgiven me.



Amitabh Bachchan



Jayalalithaa

Tell us about the episode where Kapil Dev broke down on your show.

I've no idea what made Kapil cry. I interviewed him for *Hard Talk* as he wanted to talk about the match fixing charges levied on him. He had turned up wearing shorts saying the camera is only from the waist up. I told him we didn't have a choice. We talked about the allegations on him. It was a 25-minute interview and around ten minutes into it. I said to him, 'Does it worry you that you will be remembered as the captain who won the World Cup, the highest wicket taker and now the man who took Rs 25 lakhs?' He just put his head down and started crying continuously with his eyes and nose streaming and his voice breaking till the end. I don't think that question was responsible. I feel it was the anger, frustration and emotion building up inside him that suddenly just burst out.

Which has been your most unsatisfactory interview?

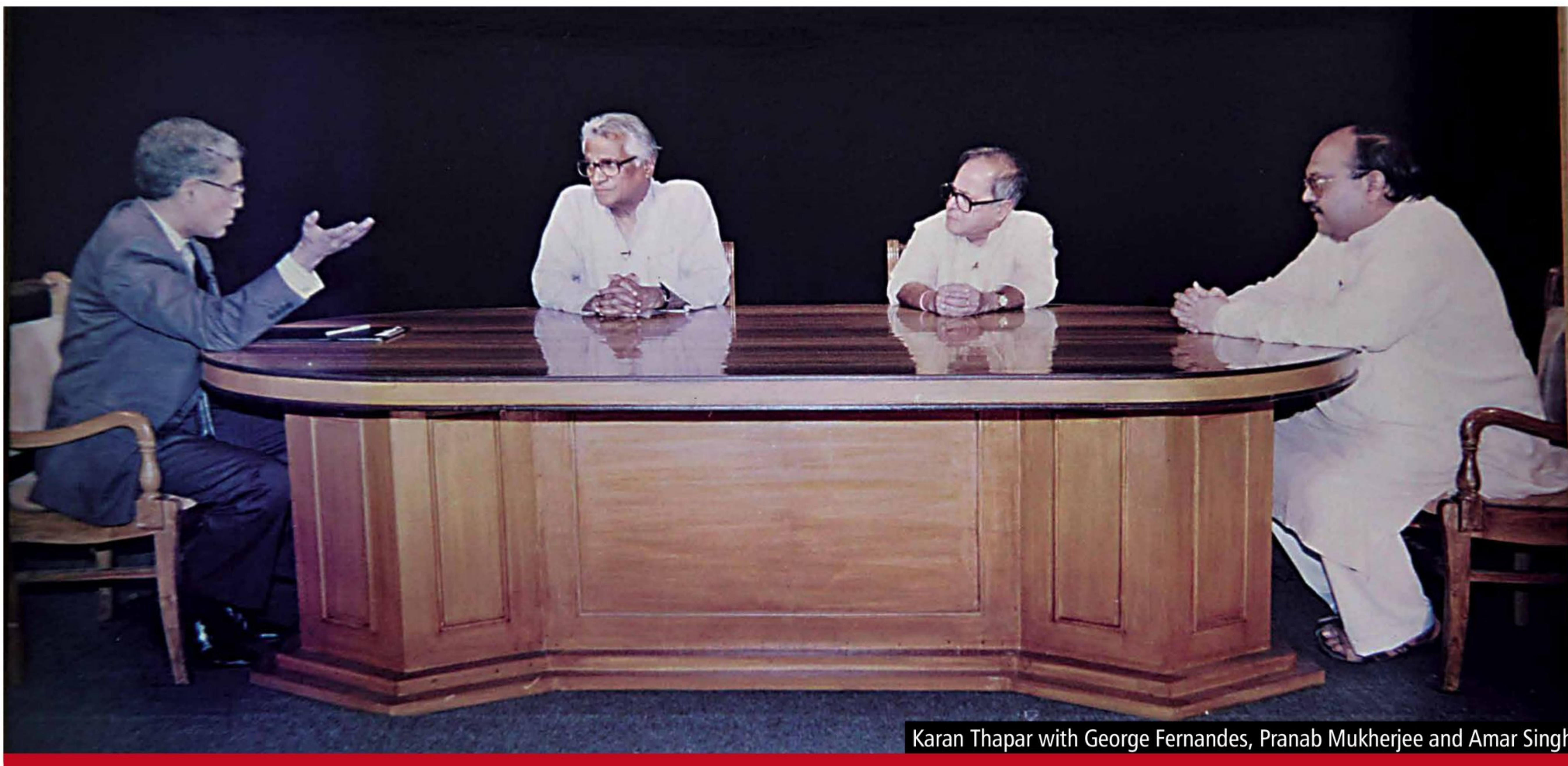
This has to be the one I did with A R Rahman. His association with the western world hadn't begun then and he was

"I've done several interviews with Shah Rukh Khan who I think is extremely intelligent."

crippled with shyness. I had a series of three questions and to each of those he responded by saying 'Ummmmm'. We did the interview three times and then fit the longest answer from them. Now, he's a changed person — more confident communicative and forthcoming.

Jayalalithaa was one person who didn't reciprocate your thanks in your programme. What really happened?

She was very upset with me because she thought the questions were not right. When it ended, I put my hand out to thank her, but she refused. Two years later, at a national integration council meeting, I went and met her and she seemed to have forgotten what had happened, I was charmed by her response.



Karan Thapar with George Fernandes, Pranab Mukherjee and Amar Singh

Have you ever forgotten into trouble for any of the stories you have penned down or any particular interview during the show? How did you handle the situation?

I haven't got terribly into trouble but there was an interview with a Gohar Ayub Khan, the son of General Ayub Khan and also a former Pakistan Foreign Minister, who had been constantly saying that an Indian Army Director of Intelligence had sold India's war plans to his father. During the intense course of discussion with him, he hinted Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw's name. All the papers picked it up the next day and I got to know that Manekshaw's children were understandably quite upset as they thought I was responsible for their father's name coming out. It wasn't me, but Gohar who hinted his name. It could be pure libel, but what else do you do when someone starts talking lie that on your show?

Recalling some of the wonderful moments you might have shared with politicians, or celebs, tell us a few anecdotes?

Among the people I admire and find a great challenge to interview include Kapil

"I think, one main difference is that writing in the west is more precise and not opinionated than what passes off in India, which is more an individual's opinion and a prejudice."

Sibal, Mani Shankar Aiyar, P Chidambaram, L K Advani, Arun Jaitly, Sitaram Yechury and several more. There are people who sense what you are driving at very quickly as they understand the question faster than most.

There is also a very interesting story with the interview that I did with Jaswant Singh, who I was introduced to by my cousin Romila Thapar. When his book came out, there was this story about a

mole. We did a very acrimonious interview as he thought I kept accusing him of treason but I told him it was tantamount. He got angry. For two-three years, we didn't talk, after which his second book on Jinnah came out and he contacted me. I went ahead with great trepidation, but he didn't say a thing to me. I rehearsed the interview with him, tutored him to be careful. It was broadcast in two parts over the weekend. On a Monday, the book was released but before that, everyone knew his views on Jinnah. He got sacked from his party on Tuesday. They said they hadn't read the book, but watched the show.

I've also interviewed General Pervez Musharraf several times. Barely three months into the office, he'd given me an angry and acrimonious interview. But, during the commercial break, he was very charming. I complimented him on his tie which he presented to me after the shoot. He was very nice to the crew as well and asked the cameraman for a cigarette.

I've done several interviews with Shah Rukh Khan who I think is extremely intelligent. After the interview ended, he was terribly embarrassed when the press

"I feel that the accuracy of reportage is better in newspapers. One way TV scores is because it's more entertaining and accessible."

was taking his photos. It was endearing to see him like that. He was very sweet and in fact, helped me get an interview with Madhuri Dixit who was on the top of her career then.

I also had a lovely interview with Dalai Lama who announced his retirement on my show. It created a huge stir in the Tibetan Community.

Who figures in your wish list of interviewees?

I would love to interview Sonia Gandhi. She has promised me one many times. In fact, when I met her, I reminded her of her promise. She said, I didn't say when. I would also like to interview Rahul Gandhi if he agrees.

As a journalist, one often strikes a chord with celebs and ends up being friends with them. As a seasoned journalist, how would you say one must separate profession from personal life?

There are very few people who become your friends while doing such interviews as the time duration is minimal. It's never easy to interview a friend till the time you are doing a personality piece. Political interviews are never easy. They partly accept the interview because you are a friend and expect you to be lenient and understanding. When the interview begins, you have a professional job to do. It's always best to avoid interviewing friends, but often you can't.



How have you seen the evolution of journalism over the years?

TV has grown enormously. It has come to a point that most people watch TV than read papers. The pertinent question is of the quality of coverage. I feel that the accuracy of reportage is better in newspapers. One way TV scores is because it's more entertaining and accessible. TV interviews need to be more substantive.

Which years in Indian journalistic history can be considered as a benchmark for journalism?

There have been landmark events in India's journalistic history like the Bofors expose. Even the last few months with the CWG expose, 2G scam, Adarsh scandal, CVC scam, the Anna Hazare movement and many more such events, have made a very good period for Indian journalism.

How would you compare Indian and International journalistic writing?

I think, one main difference is that writing in the west is more precise and not opinionated than what passes off in India, which is more an individual's opinion and a prejudice. Also, intelligent profiles are done better abroad. Even TV documentaries are a major difference.

Abroad, the current affairs discussion programmes are better structured while here, we concentrate on *tamasha* to generate heat. They prefer to shed light.

You have seen an entire generation of journalists come and go? What are the changes you see in the current lot?

There is enormous enthusiasm in the new lot accompanied by incredible dedication and great curiosity. I find it strange why they address each other as sir. I feel journalists are friends and colleagues.

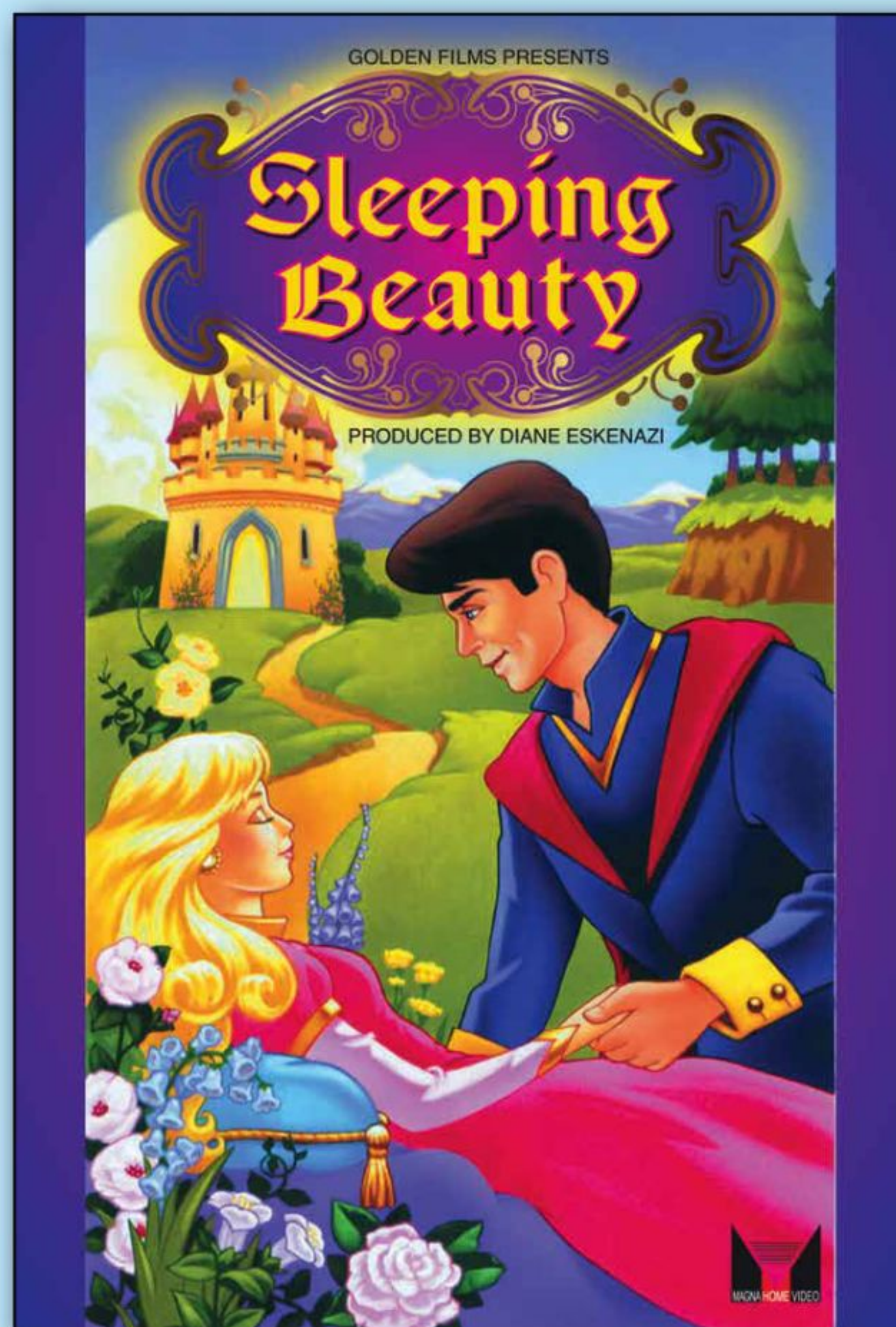
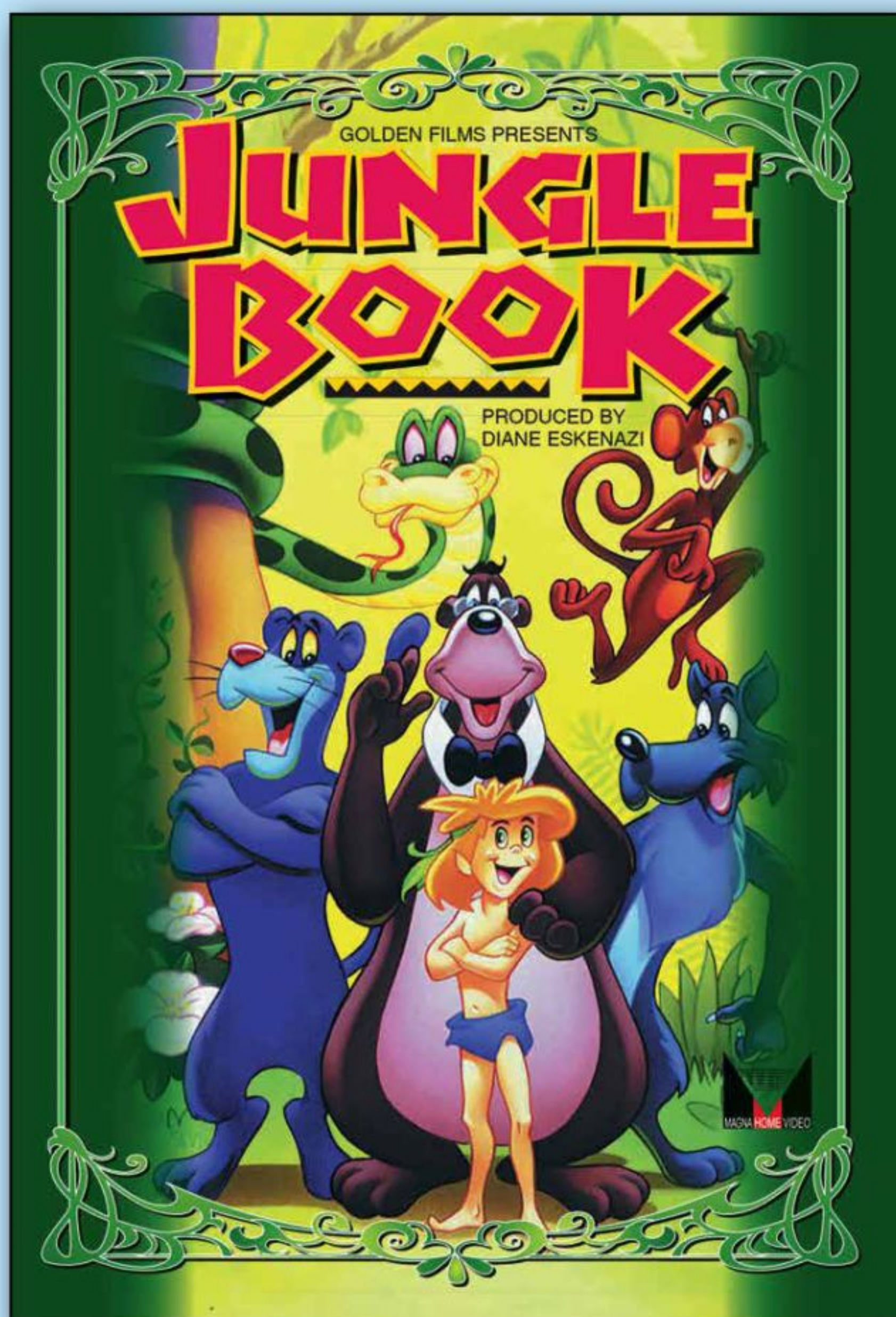
How much do looks matter in journalism today?

It's not just your physical features, but also how you dress, behave and conduct yourself. Everything put together matters for both the reporter as well as the interviewee.

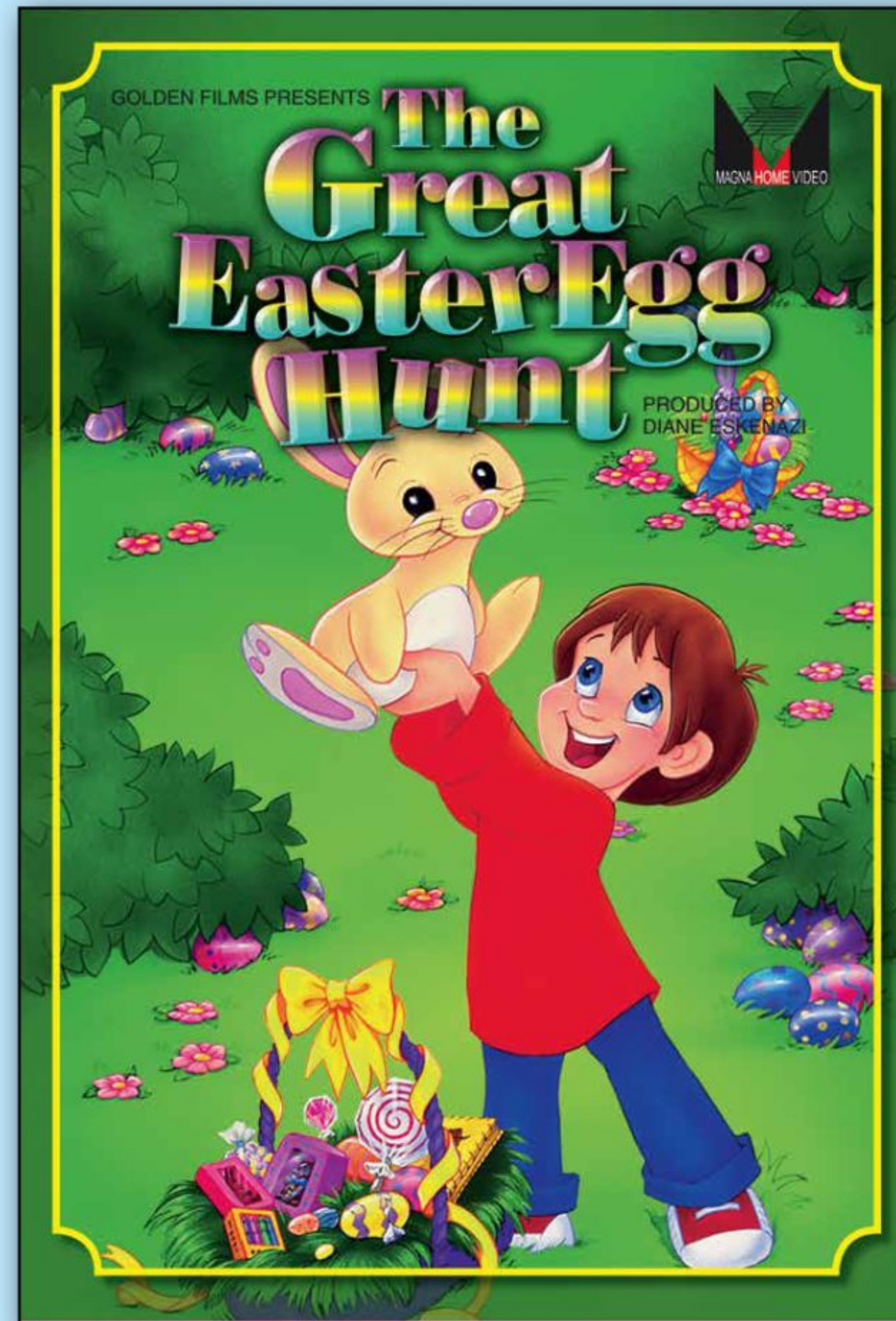
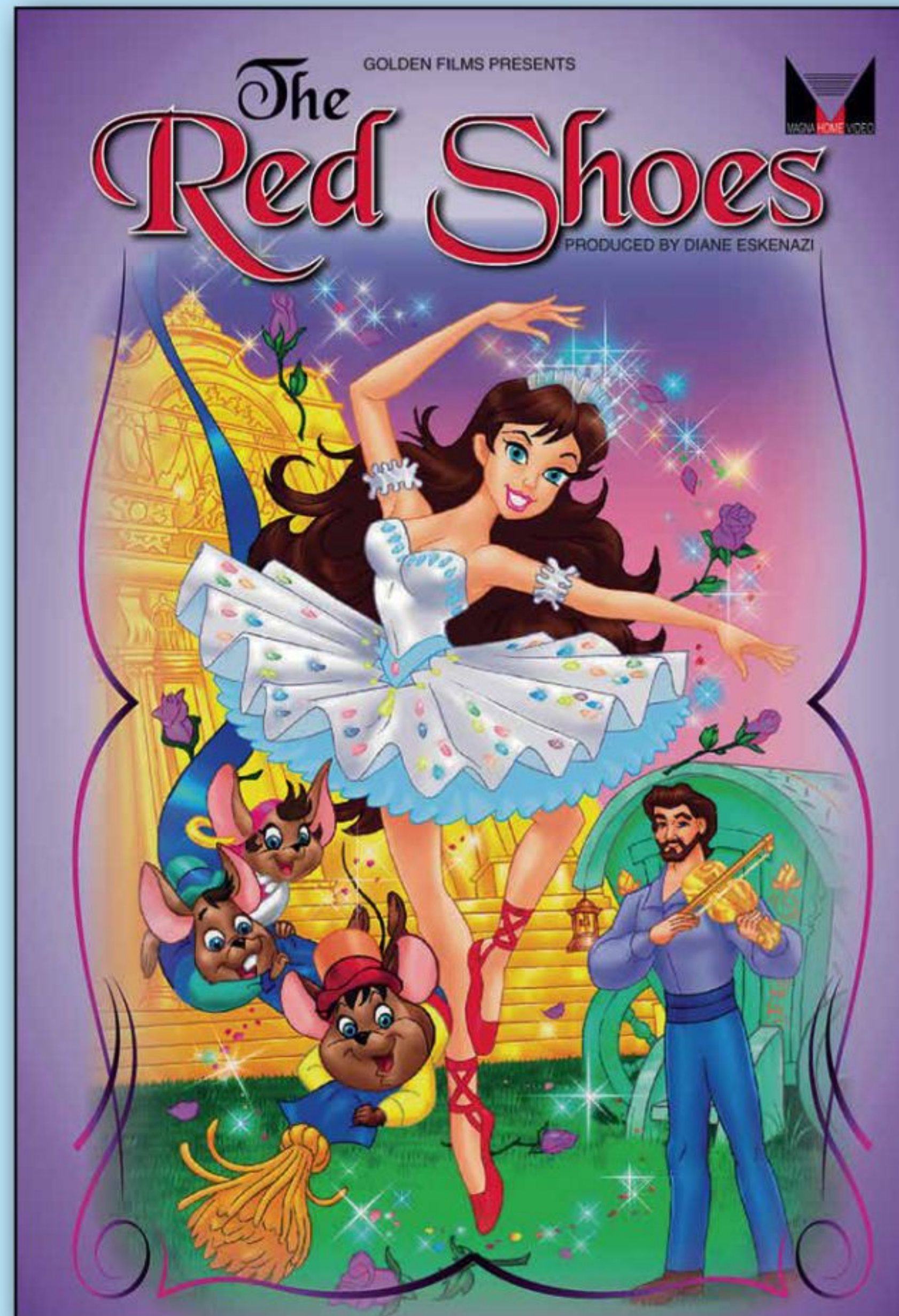
Lastly, a lot of politics goes around in journalistic organizations. How do you cope with it?

For the last ten years, I've been working in my own organization and it has been very peaceful. Journalists tend to be anxious to ensure prominent place for their articles and to be successful which something similar to all the professions is as well. **S**

MAKE YOUR CHILDREN RELIVE THESE MAGIC MOMENTS



from the amazing characters in Jungle Book to the sublime romance of Sleeping Beauty & Red Shoes, whether it is The Great Easter Egg Hunt or The Secret Treasure Of Machu Picchu or The Miracle In Toyland.



Pick up the latest at your favorite DVD/VCD store.

 **MAGNA HOME VIDEO**

Magna House, 100/E Old Prabhadevi Road, Prabhadevi, Mumbai-400 025. Mob.: 9820628643 / Tel: 022- 67091234 Fax: 022-24306523 E-mail: govind@magnamags.com

FOR ORDERS & ENQUIRIES: **Mumbai:** M4U Music: 022-23894381/2388/7999, Pritam Music Pvt Ltd: 022-40598835/36/37/38, Rhytem House Pvt. Ltd.: 022-43222727, Samir Audio Pvt Ltd: 022-26141499 **Pune:** Dimple Video House: 020-26056466, Nakoda Music: 9850841860 **Nagpur:** J P Rhythm House: 0982222255 **Ahmedabad:** National Music Centre: 079-22123740 **Indore:** Sacho Satram Das: 0731-2530694/95 **Bhopal:** Variety Book House: 0755-2554057 **Delhi:** New Mahajan Traders: 09818367117, New Superstar: 09999801201, Teenage Music Shop: 09810636263 **Chandigarh:** Chandigarh Music House: 0172-5009037, Music Corner: 09814470601 **Amritsar:** Luxmi Audio Video: 09872089421 **Jaipur:** Kusum Enterprises: 0141-4010728, **Kanpur:** Tirupati Music House: 09369171816 **Ludhiana:** Sunil Video: 0161-2740132 **Varanasi:** Shailendra: 09415202133 **Kolkata:** Arvind House of Electronics: 033-22537613 **Gauhati:** Reiliance Enterprises: 09435407988 **Chennai:** Vignesh & Co: 09840243290 **Hyderabad:** Supreme Music (India) Pvt. Ltd. 040-24613846/24741132 **Bangalore:** Parshwanath Video: 080-22100238 **Ernakulam:** Vita Entertainment: 09847070599

DVD'S & VCD'S AVAILABLE ON MAGNA HOME VIDEO ACROSS ALL LEADING HOME VIDEO & MUSIC STORES

THE BEST OF **JOHN MAXWELL** NOW AT YOUR BOOK STALLS



Available at all leading Book Stores. If unavailable, please send a Demand Draft for ₹175/- each book, payable to Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., Magna House, 100/E, Old Prabhadevi Road, Prabhadevi, Mumbai - 400 025. Tel. 67091234. Please indicate clearly your address and mention title of book. **FREE** postage, packing and handling in India only. Website: www.magnamags.com • E-mail: books@magnamags.com

▼ KITCHEN APPLIANCES

Faber launches built-in coffee machine with options for a variety of coffees, cup sizes and operating modes – service or self-service – for the perfect cup of coffee as per your taste.



▲ BEAUTY

'Kai Essentials' has launched its latest range of handcrafted shea butter bathing bars infused with the goodness of almond oil, activated charcoal, avocado and many more essential ingredients.

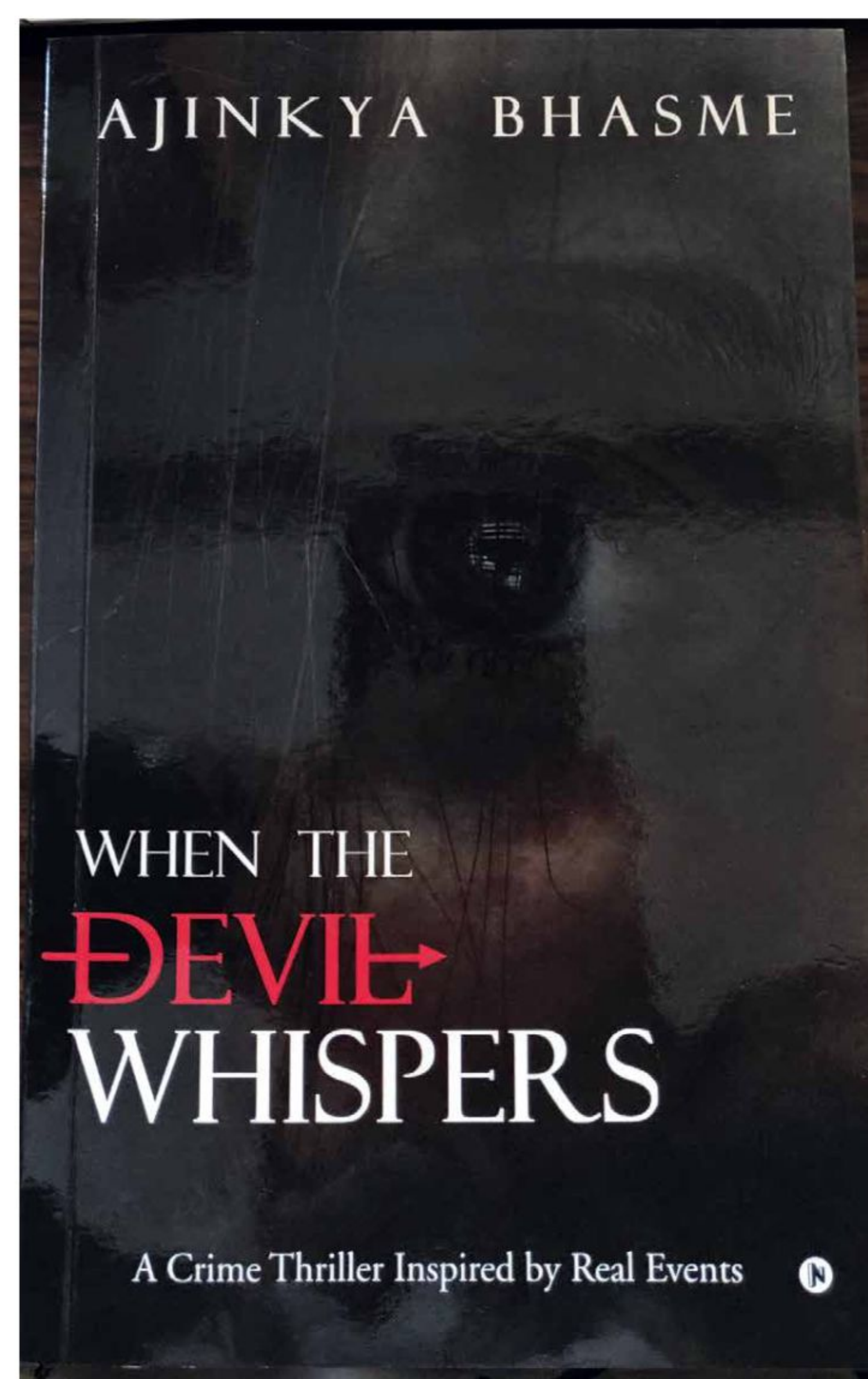


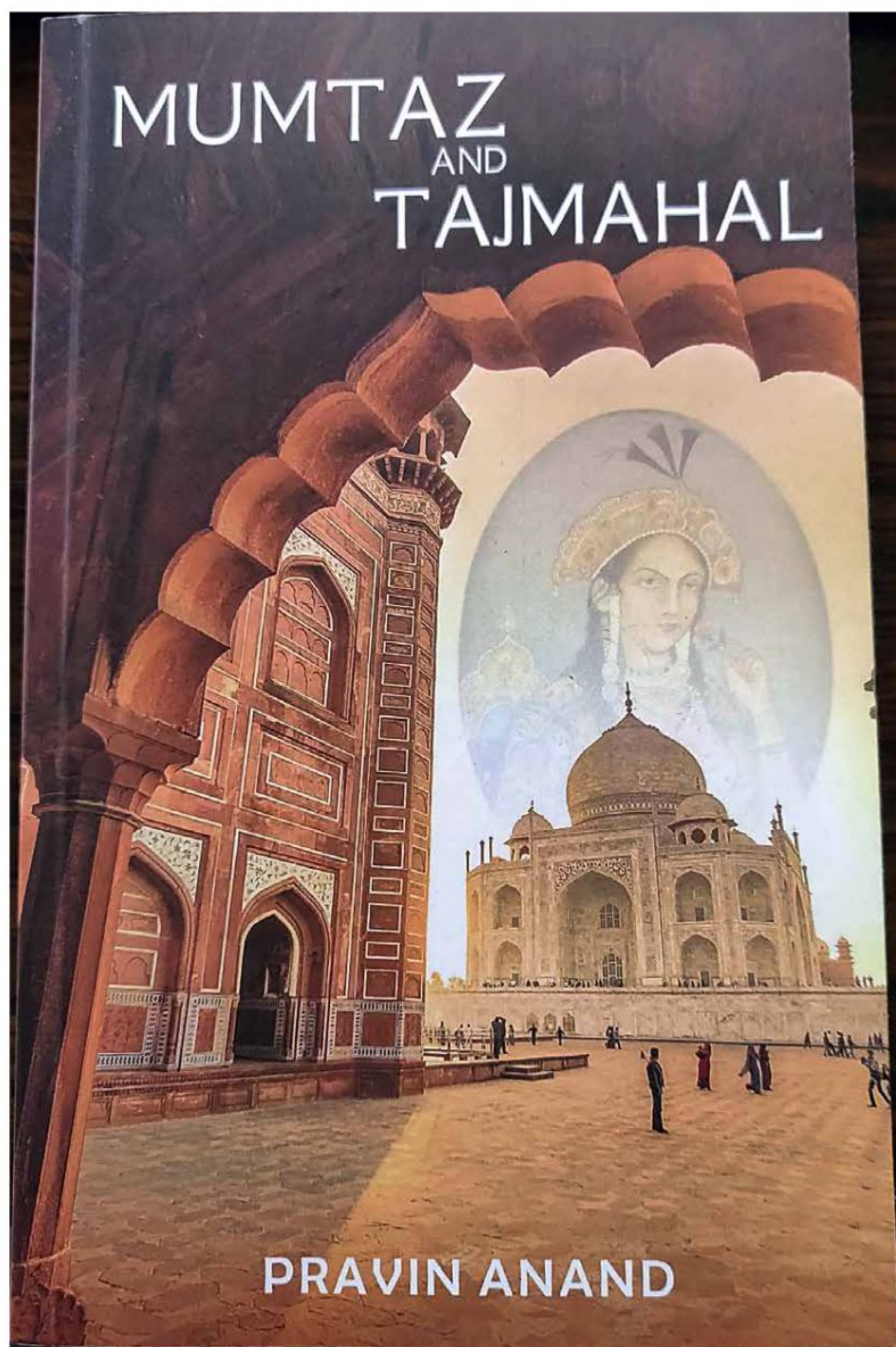
▲ GROOMING

Liberty Lifestyle's new fragrance line presents twelve brand-new perfumes and aftershave which are made keeping India's weather conditions in mind.

► BOOKS

Author Ajinkya Bhasme comes up with her new crime thriller *When The Devil Whispers* inspired by real life events. The story is enthralling and keeps you on the edge-of-your-seat.



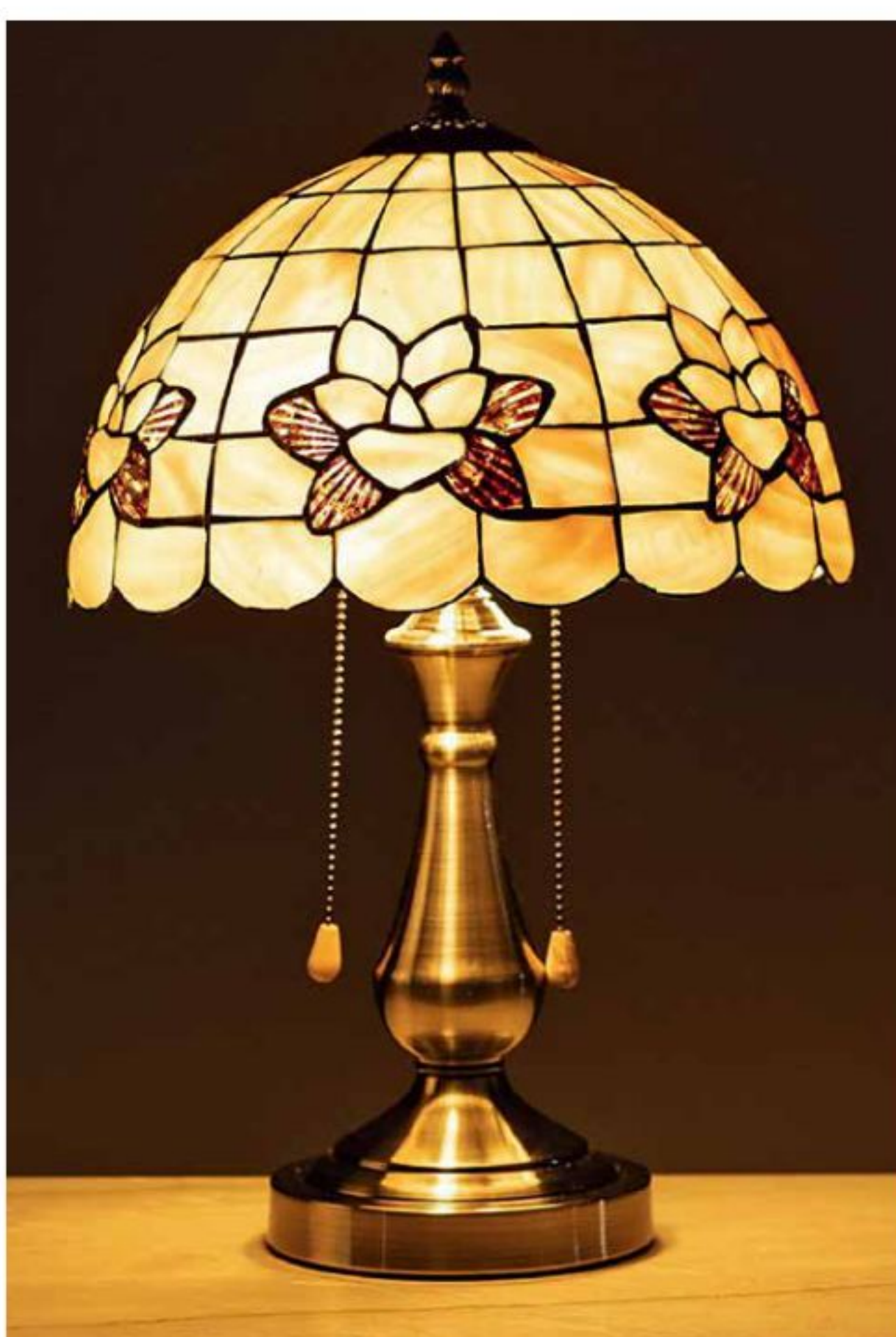


▲ **BOOKS**

Mumtaz and Tajmahal/by Pravin Anand narrates the love story of Khurram and Arjumand that led to the formation of the white wonder of marble in India.

▼ **HOME DÉCOR**

The Decor Kart recently unveiled its long-awaited Enamoured Collection. It consists of lamps that are ethereal by day and magical by night.



▼ **ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY**

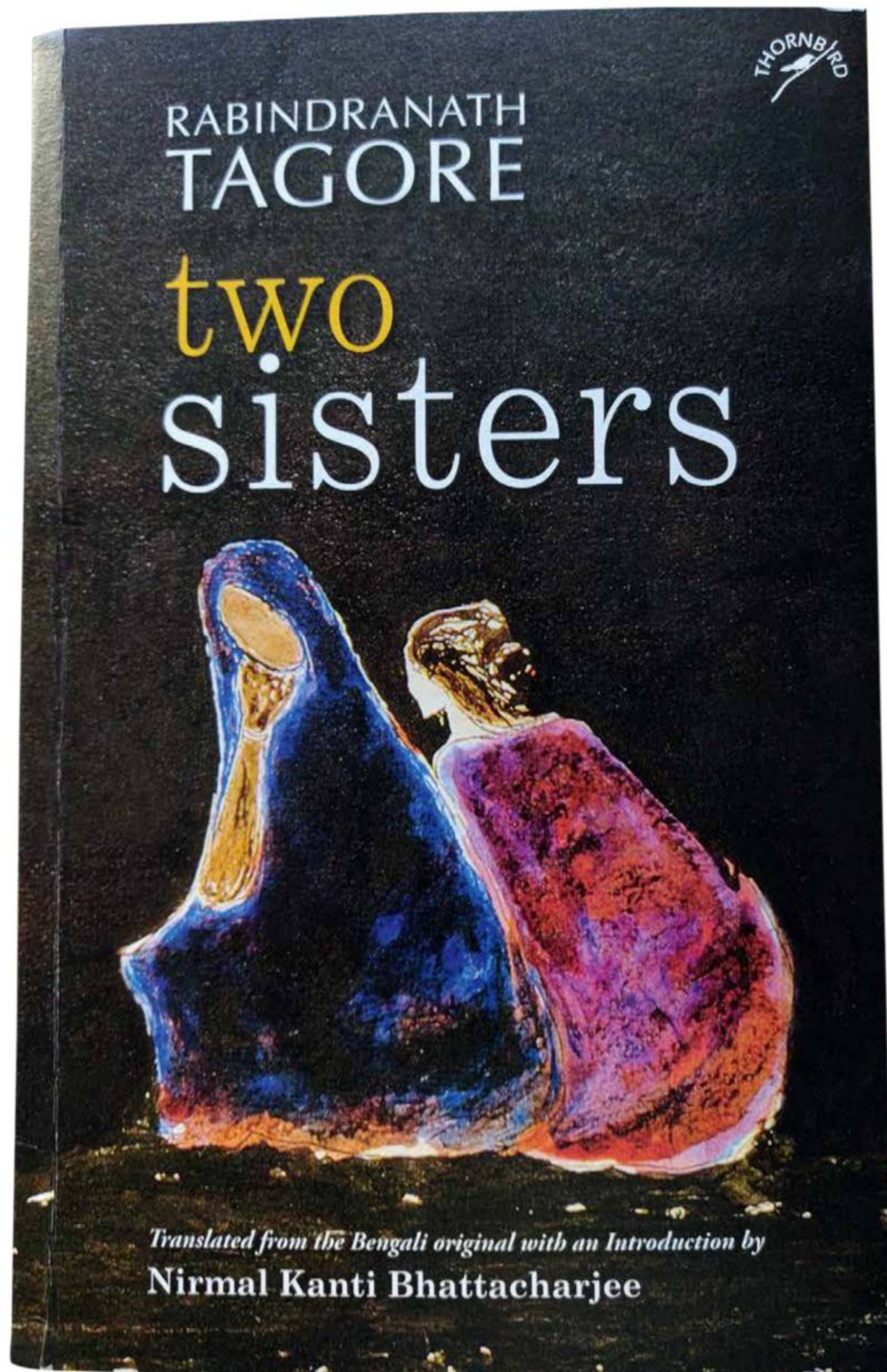
Ecosac utility bags are the perfect alternative to plastic one for shopping, travel and day-to-day utilities. Eco-friendly, fashionable, highly durable, sturdy, reusable and lasting for a minimum for three years, these bags are made in India. Purchase them at www.ecosac.co



▼ **BEAUTY**

Alanna, a completely natural skin care brand, brings a universal product, '4 in 1 Clay Mask', which comprises of four rich exotic clay - volcanic, kaolin, red sandalwood and French red - along with turmeric, neem and aloe vera. It rehydrate your skin for a healthy shine.





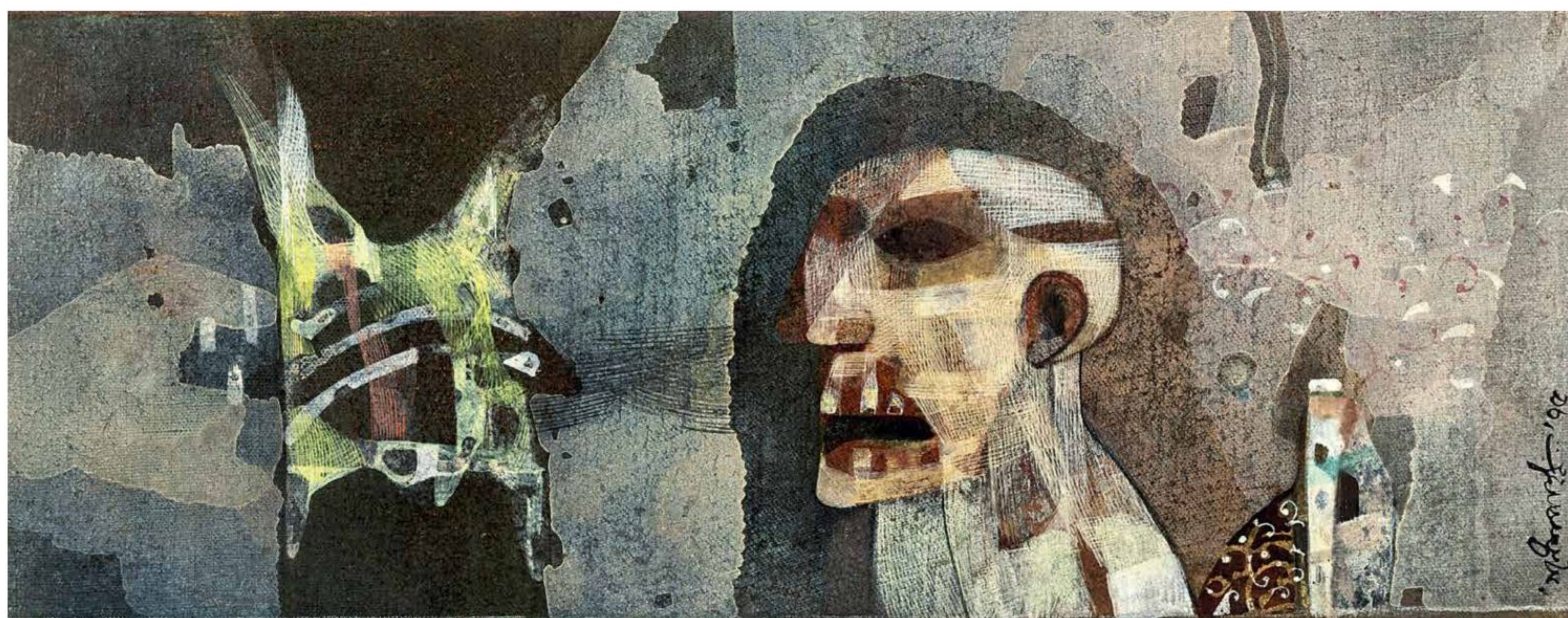
▲ BOOKS

Another of Rabindranath Tagore's creations has been translated to make 'two sisters' which offers a unique perspective on conflicting man-woman relationships.



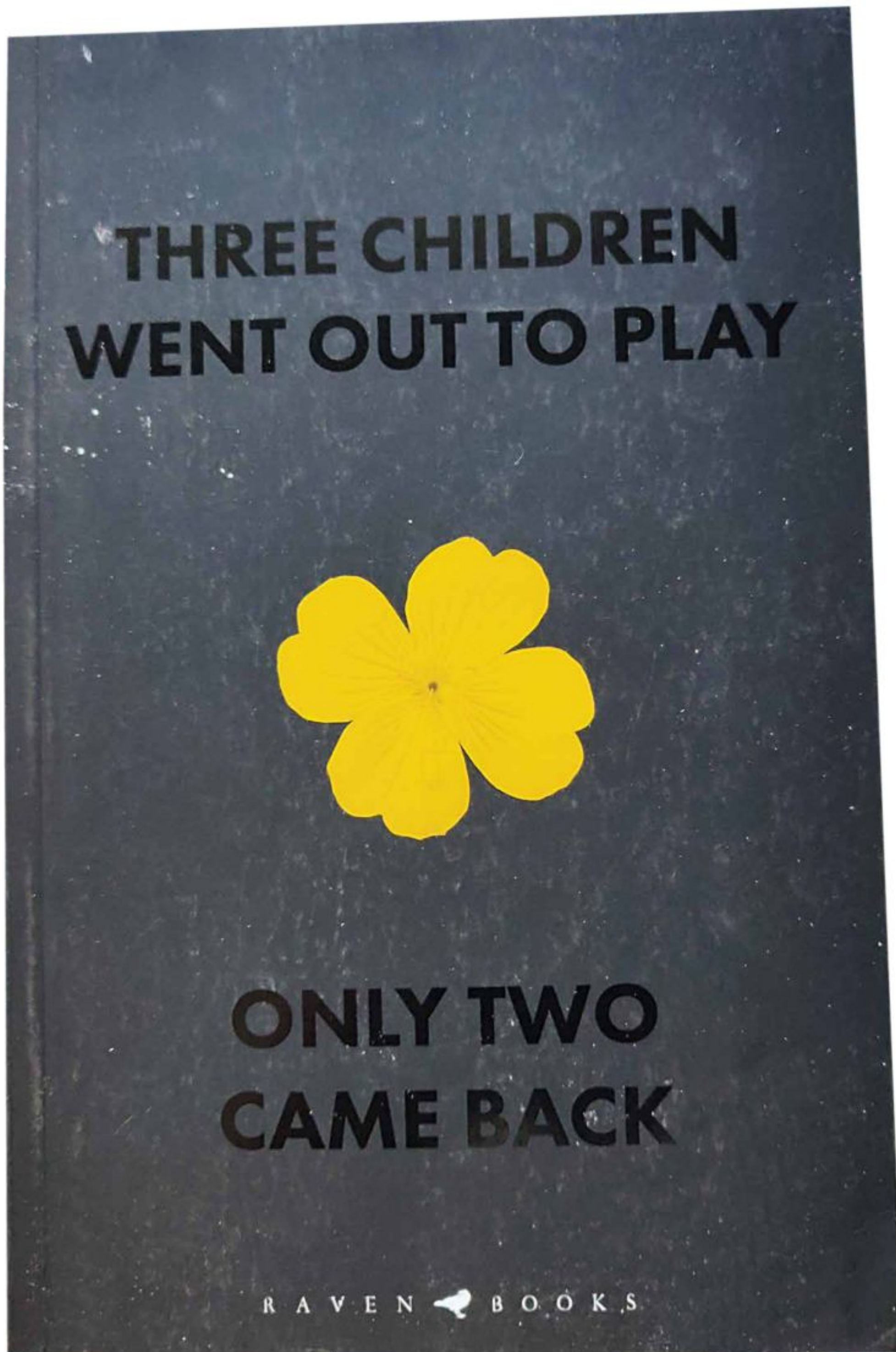
▲ HEALTH

'Parag Milk Foods' offers a variety of healthy products like 'Avvatar Advanced Muscle Gainer' which supports lean muscle gain, 'Go Chocolate Cheese' which combines the taste of chocolate in the form of cheese and 'Go Colo Power' a product in powder form containing high colostrum value.



▲ EXHIBITION

The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) opened the first exhibition of 2019 'Over the Edge, Crossing the Line: Five Artists from Bengal' at KNMA Noida on 20th January 2019 and will continue till 30 June 2019.



BOOKS

Following up on the Alice Clark-Platts' *The Flower Girl* series, *Three Children Went Out To Play Only Two Came Back* is an intriguing read.



FOOD

'be' is a Thailand-based brand which provides a wide range of pure and flavoured coconut water and coconut chips.

EXPERIENCE

'A'Kreations Hair & Beyond' is the luxury salon everyone has been talking about in Mumbai. Located in the heart of Bandra - Waterfield Road, it offers a variety of luxurious and exciting experiences from hair styling to complete skin and beauty services. The place utilises devices and cosmetic products from French beauty brand 'Thalgo'. The beauty treatments involve advanced machines like iBeauty for cleansing and also infusion of cosmetics. Apart from being experts at their job, the staff is extremely friendly which elevates the whole experience.



Singing a Different Hue

| By **SAPNA SARFARE** |

How would you truly define your personal style?

There's nothing in specific. I feel whatever suits me is my style

What is that one piece in your wardrobe that you could refer to as 'timeless'?

There is a green colour gown which, I feel, is timeless.

A fashion fetish you have...

Well it's a little uncommon. So I follow this lady called Queen Rania. I love the ways she dresses up and carries herself. It's elegant classy and fancy at the same time.

Who is your style icon? And why?

I don't have a style icon. I like to keep having ideas from different people so don't have any one.

Any singer you look up to when it comes to their fashion sense?

Taylor swift.

The perfect outfit for any concert

I jump around the stage a lot. So, for me, it will be nice denim or pant with cool sequin top and boots beneath.

Any outfit you find comfortable while going for a recording?

For recording, I wear whatever I find in my messy wardrobe (laughs). I'm super lazy!

What's your ideal outfit for a date night?

A nice strappy gown, maybe.

How would you really dress up for a casual party?

For casual parties, I feel a nice fitted dress with heels.

Are you brand conscious?

Not really! I pick up whatever I like; but a little conscious when it comes to handbags.

How do you like to play with colours in your style?

Well, honestly I don't pay that much amount of attention on colours in particular. I feel all the colours suits me.

What, according to you, would be the ideal attire for a wedding?

For wedding, it should be something in red or in wine colour, a nice round neck blouse with a little flowy lehenga and a light shade dupatta.

A fashion designer you would choose for your personal wardrobe. Why?

Sabyasachi (Mukherjee) because his

designs can make you look royal.

What are the five must-haves in a woman's wardrobe?

Denim, a white kurta, a nice fitted dress, a flowy gown and a saree. I love sarees.

What would one generally find you wearing at home?

Pyjamas with oversized t-shirt.

What is your favourite shopping destination?

I can shop anywhere, literally. Locally I go to Lokhandwala in Mumbai. Otherwise Dubai is love, especially for cosmetics.

Why do you like these places?

Dubai is super organised and has almost everything and the best part is it is close by. So you can plan a holiday or a shopping trip in like no time.

Fashion capital of the world according to you?

Fashion capital, according to me, is a difficult question to answer because there are many places I haven't seen yet. But I find Indians quite fashionable. People in North East Pakistan have a different kind of a class. I also like Dubai of course. So I think I can't name any one. **S**

Aakanksha Sharma,
a winner of *Amul Voice of India*
Chote Ustaad and finalist of
Jo Jeeta Wohi Superstar 2, is now
a much in demand singer and
has sung for movies like *Gold*,
Andhadhun, *1921* and *Rustom*.
She speaks of her other
passion — fashion.



“She is exactly what Gandhi was”

| By **SAPNA SARFARE** |

Indian theatre is as old as the country and its culture. Our theatre courtesy our artistic sensibilities and values has allowed us to experiment and display works that just spews creativity and showcases issues happening around us. Plays on issues have been happening for quite some time and are making a dent on our minds. Mahesh Dattani is one such extraordinary soul who for numerous years has been creating an impact on our minds with his theatre. This Indian director, actor, playwright and writer has created some landmark theatre and film work that have stood the tests of time. His influential work made him become the first playwright in English to win the Sahitya Akademi award and his plays have been directed by eminent people right from Arvind Gaur to Alyque Padamsee. He does not believe in keeping his creativity stuck to one creative arena.



Acclaimed theatre personality Mahesh Dattani is back in action with *Mengoubi: The Fair One*, an unusual play on the life and struggles of Manipuri civil rights activist Irom Sharmila. He speaks on working with eminent critic and writer Shanta Gokhale on this play, the play's importance for viewers and his theatre world.



And now he is back in theatre with a play on the Manipuri civil rights activist Irom Sharmila. The play *Mengoubi: The Fair One* has been written by Shanta Gokhale and directed by Dattani with music by Anadi Nagar and choreography Tapas Boro. The cast includes Padma Damodaran, Sukhita Aiyar, Prince Kanwal, Jason Tham, Paayal Kapoor Nair, Himanshu Talreja and Rahul Valmiki. The play was recently performed at Prithvi Theatre, Juhu, Mumbai on January 2nd and 3rd. In fact, this is probably the first time that we see the genius of Gokhale and Dattani come together for a play that will have an influential effect on the viewers.

Mengoubi: The Fair One is around the legendary Manipuri civil rights activist who for 16 years fought to repel the draconian Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or AFSPA. The law given by the Indian government to be used in the seven north-eastern states was primarily employed by the army to arrest people, search properties without warrants and even use force under suspicion. The misuse of these powers led to people revolting in their own way. Sharmila took to fasting for 16 years and was thus charged by the government under attempted suicide. In fact she was forced fed through nasogastric intubation to be kept alive. Her brave fight for the people made her an icon. While the play revolves around Irom Sharmila and her struggles, one assumes that it will not just be about that but much more. Dattani reveals, "The play is about everything that Irom Sharmila stood for and stands for. At the heart of the play lies the question: Who do we feel are worthy of our compassion? As mainland Indians, why do we exclude people from our consciousness?"

Choices are made as per what suits your thought process or liking. The same must have gone for Dattani. Either it must have been at the back of his mind or something must have happened to make him think about revolving a play around Sharmila. “It really made me think about life in Manipur,” Dattani confesses. “The human condition

but we have never worked together. When she invited me over for a reading of her new play, I thought it best if I had a reading with my actors just to get a sense of how it might play out. Based on the feedback, I was pretty clear in my mind that I want to direct a full-scale production.”

Dattani knew Gokhale as a friend and is also exposed to her as an eminent theatre critic. But working with her as against knowing her from a different angle would be a unlike experience. He calls

as the spoken text. I feel the text is full of reasoning and complex ideas, whereas the music and stylised movement perfectly balance these with emotional energy.”

Of course, anything creative will have the makers take some creative liberties as they will have something to say through it. Here we have a slightly different issue since the play is based on an actual living person. Dattani confesses to have taken creative liberties. But he also differs on it too. “It doesn’t claim to be a bio-drama. Even biopics and dramas take several liberties. While maintaining integrity with Irom Sharmila’s vision and struggle, it

provides a completely fictitious setting – the home and the imagination of a middle-class woman in Delhi, the daughter of an army officer. This provides a beautiful counterpoint to the horrific presence of AFSPA in the lives of innocent citizens of India in Manipur.”



is at the heart of every drama. When it is so specifically located, in a strange way, it reflects the struggle of all human beings. To me what was also exciting is that it is not just a piece of didactic drama. It offers rich aesthetic possibilities that include traditional storytelling to modern rap. Also it is great to move away from naturalistic drama and really explore the spatial dimension of theatre, rather than just the aural one.”

Most of us who have read about Sharmila know her as a fascinatingly powerful person that she is. Dattani too sees her in similar light. “I see her and her struggle as no less than that of Gandhi. Here is a woman who fasted for sixteen years, lost an election miserably, felt betrayed by her own people and yet moved on. She is exactly what Gandhi was. She tried to fight violence with peace.”

Shanta Gokhale is not a new name in the world of Indian culture and theatre writing. She happens to be an eminent writer, translator, and theatre critic. Speaking about joining hands with his dear friend, he explains, “It’s thirty years since I know her

it a tricky question. “Shanta has always been critical of my writing, sending me personal letters with detailed notes. This is a very healthy relationship I have with her. Where this helped me is that I know exactly how she thinks, what her aesthetics are, and her concerns. Shanta has been a gem throughout this process. She gave me carte blanche to edit her work. An email I got from her after the staged reading said she was happy that I made this play my own without making it any less hers!” To be able to work with a friend on a professional level is indeed a blessing as one can see here.

The play’s format and presentation is quite simple, states Dattani. “At the heart of my design are the various story telling methods. Music and movement play an important part in my design, as important



If you probably notice things in the creative world, plays or rather any work of art like films, etc. on lives of controversial or important figures are never short of drama. Dattani too has stories has to share. “Ah, this one, unfortunately, has been a smooth ride! There is nothing to hide, although the play does focus on Irom Sharmila’s love interest, Desmond Coutinho. But this is all public knowledge. They are both happily married in real life. In our drama, she isn’t too sure whether that is a road she wants to take.”

At the moment, we are going through tumultuous times wherein a lot are speaking of being restricted in terms of creative freedom. Dattani too has seen and heard things. He adds, "The situation is bound to get better as the right-wing party are shaken out of their complacency. They will soon realize, in Irom's words, that violence and repression can never be a solution to human problems. I am positive that the days of violence against artists, intellectuals and journalists who have the courage to speak are coming to an end. It is sad that we had to lose people like Dabholkar, Gauri Lankesh and many others to reach this point of intolerance to intolerance."

If you keenly follow theatre in India, Dattani's name stands out prominently. One can safely say he has been part of our theatre revolution in a big way. But whether he believes that we will be able to sustain

to be as creative as yesterday must be difficult. "I think the important thing is not to be creative like yesterday, but to be creative like today! Staying in my time and place has been the biggest lesson of my life. It is so easy to get comfortable with past successes. Staying constantly in a state of discomfort helps!"

If you ask who he sees as Mahesh Dattani in making from the younger generation, he instantaneously replies, "Oh, Mahesh Dattani and beyond! There is far more talent, resources, etc. available.

his field. When they meet, the work-related talks that might happen would be quite thought-provoking. It also must help him grow in some ways. He nods in agreement. "You nailed it with that question. I teach and I learn when I teach. Young people have their own sophistication and intelligence. They are



good theatre in India on a long run needs to be heard. He thinks so. "There are far greater things happening in the theatre today. Not just urban theatre but crossovers from traditional forms to contemporary themes. *King Lear* is being done in Kathakali. New works are being developed using Yakshagana and other folk forms."

Dattani's career graph has been long and illustrious. For a creative person like him, waking up each day with the strength

The danger is in succumbing to fashions rather than succumbing to passions."

To talk about his works in details is futile as every theatre buff worth his or her salt knows about it. Does he feel that any of his works could be bettered now? Pat comes an witty reply of all of them. "I stopped reading my own works because it wants me to get back to the drawing board and rewrite all of them. One day when nobody wants me to do anything new and people do a face palm and say 'get that old fool out of the rehearsal room', then I might sit and rewrite all my works!" His honesty is heartening and it is as real as the person that he is.

He is a well-known figure in the theatre world and has great relations with both his contemporaries and juniors from

very, very conscious of what is passé. They are judging you for relevance. It keeps me on my toes."

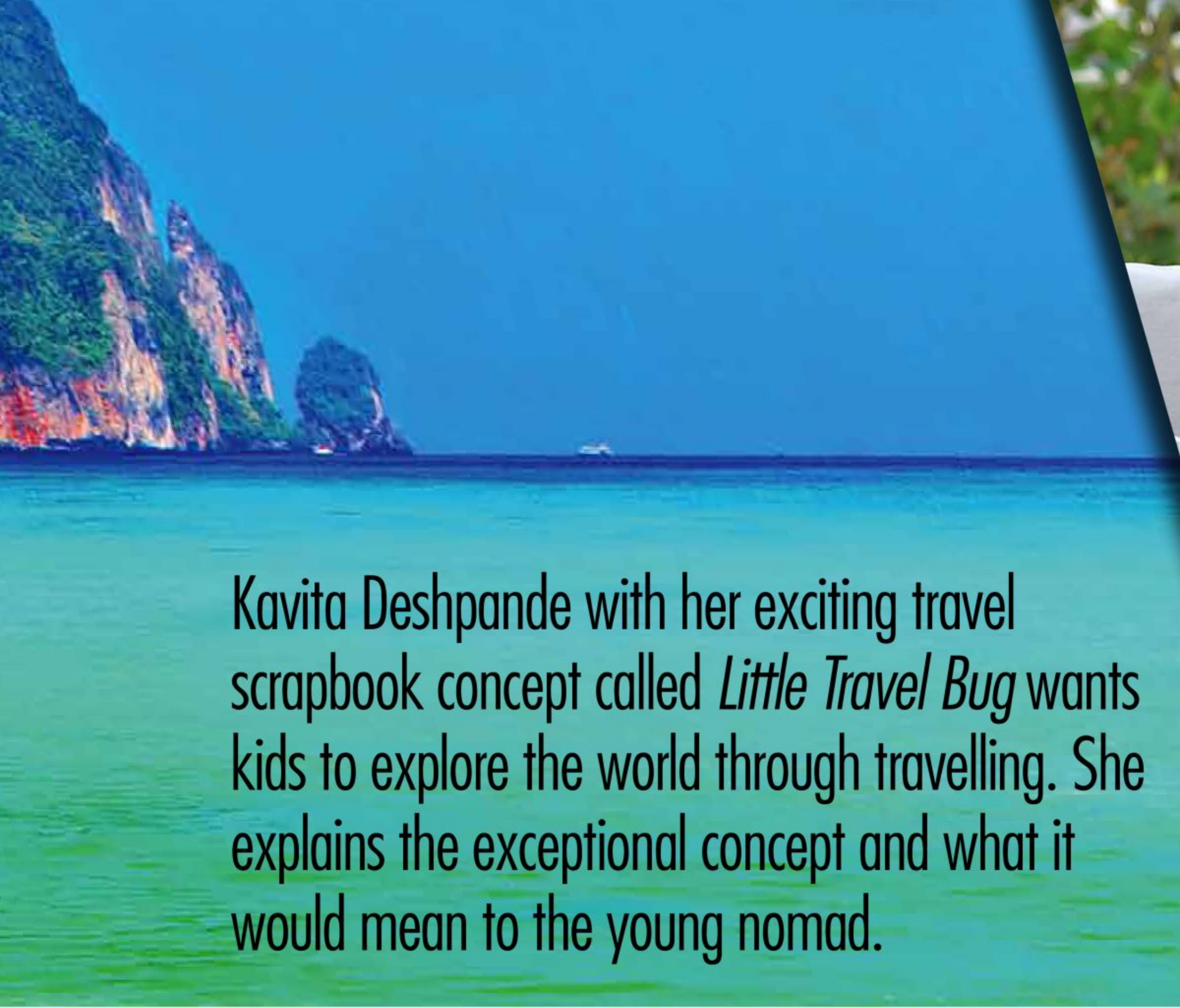
The talks are going well, indeed and I am keen that he speaks more. An erudite mind like his needs to be revealed to the world. They must know him and appreciate his work that has a lasting impact on our minds and values. But we must part and we did. But before that, I ask him to again explain his new play on Irom Sharmila to those interested. Why should they come to see *Mengoubi: The Fair One*? His reply is moving like his work. "It is your story. If you value your rights to live in peace, follow your head and heart, then do come and imagine 'What if those rights are taken away from me?' Also, come because there is a beauty in watching someone else's story that might be your own."

Storytelling is an art beautifully created by very few exceptional minds. Mahesh Dattani is one of such creative spirits who knows the importance of his work to rewrite human values, truths and emotions. We hope he is able to better his best. **S**



Travelling Young





Kavita Deshpande with her exciting travel scrapbook concept called *Little Travel Bug* wants kids to explore the world through travelling. She explains the exceptional concept and what it would mean to the young nomad.



| By **SAPNA SARFARE** |

Travelling is a great way to explore the unknown and grow in an unique way. And you would need every aid possible to know about the places you want to travel to. Making sure your kids too are bitten by wanderlust and get the right information of the places they visit is vital. And this is where Kavita Deshpande comes into the picture. Pune-based Kavita has come out with a unique travel scrapbook for all those kids who want to know about the places they travel or wish to travel. Called *Little Travel Bug*, this scrapbook will offer the young travelers all the information they want to know in a documented manner but without looking like the usual boring travel guide. It is all about enriching their innocent experiences and making them curiously better world travelers.

The first thing that you feel like asking Kavita to tell us what exactly is *Little Travel Bug* in her own words. It sounds like an intriguing thing for anyone who has been bitten by the travel bug. Speaking about the concept and the way it was launched, Kavita reveals, “*Little Travel Bug* was founded in 2015 and is intended to make travel fun, educative and enriching for children with an exciting range of travel books. We encourage children to be curious and





learn through experience. It is intended to increase their knowledge by reading about the place they are travelling to and also document and preserve memories of their vacation. We strongly believe that travel is a magical and a great learning experience for children. It helps them grow as all-rounded individuals and builds stronger family bonds.”

The concept came up in an interesting fashion with specific aims. Kavita very eagerly shares her story and how it evolved into the present version that we see in the market. She explains, “*Little Travel Bug* happened because of two primary reasons – firstly my own passion for travelling and secondly because of my children. On our family trip to Singapore, my son asked me numerable questions about the country. He wanted to know everything right from the capital to the national anthem. I found myself relying on Google and whatever little knowledge I had, which did not prove sufficient enough. I realised that children are always curious to learn more and to nurture that curiosity I began to write these books and publish them.”

Speaking from her own experience as a

kid, she adds, “As a child, I maintained a travel diary and would scribble down all my thoughts, expressions and memories about my travels. I wanted to share the gift of discovering oneself through diaries and scrapbooks with my children and others as well. It is a treasure that must be shared. Our books are well researched and beautifully illustrated providing the right information in a fun and exciting way for children.”

Now that the curiosity has been



set, we really are inquisitive to know what the book consists of and the things it offers to the young travelers who want to spread their wings and fly off to distant lands. “The books are simple yet informative for children between the age group of 5-12 years,” Kavita explains. “We have a range of travel books each covering different aspects of travel. We have destination specific travel guides cum scrapbooks, travel diaries and travel scrapbooks to preserve vacation memories.”

Since it is an innovative and new concept, Kavita has started it slowly and steadily. The regions she has covered are few to start with and on the list of ‘must visit’. She discloses, “We have international travel guides for Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand. We are soon going to launch Dubai, London and a few more places. These are the places that I have personally visited with my children and find them fun and appropriate for children. Also, these are the places that are most frequently travelled and preferred by Indian parents.” In recent times, Indians have taken to travelling and exploring the world which is very evident from the rising numbers of travel agencies.

With something as innovative as this, the chances of getting interesting feedback are more. Kavita has received feedback from those around her regarding developing the scrapbook concept which she has incorporated in her work. “When I started this venture, the idea of conceptualizing, writing and publishing books was new to me and I had no experience in this field,” she explains. “Feedback from children, parents and experts from the fraternity helped me bring everything together. I believe that positive as well as critical feedback is the key to growth. Obviously positive feedback is encouraging but I take critical feedback seriously to help build my brand and keep my customers happy and satisfied.”

Now that your interest has risen, it is time to inform you of the places where someone can get hold of these scrapbooks. Kavita has also tried marketing these books in her own unique way. “All *Little Travel Bug* books can be ordered on our website. Our books are also available on Amazon. We are trying to reach out to parents and children through different childrens’ literary festivals, exhibitions, online bloggers and schools.”

Any good business idea and work thrives on response. Kavita and her *Little Travel Bug* too has been getting very positive response. She reveals, “The response has been highly encouraging and we are very happy that parents and children are loving our books. Parents and children think of us when they think of travel and it couldn’t have been more satisfying than this. The most memorable experience has been when a mother came to us asking, ‘Please tell us the country guidebook that you are launching next so we can plan our vacation accordingly’.”

Our talks veer towards Kavita and her background. Considering the interesting and offbeat work she is doing, it is quite amusing to note that she used to work as a product manager with an insurance

company before quitting her job to take care of her children. “I always wanted to spend time with them in their growing up years. I was very keen to start something of my own, especially something that was exciting. Finally, in 2015 I decided to take that plunge. I chanced upon two ideas that

I was passionate about. I researched about both the concepts, its feasibility, had a framework in mind and set personal timelines. I still remember the day when I was at a crossroad deciding which path to take. Finally, my passion for travelling overruled everything else and I started writing and publishing travel books for children. There is no looking back since.” Always follow your passion and it will inevitably lead you to your true work. Kavita is proof enough of it.

We come back to our talk regarding her venture and her experiences with it. She



further divulges, “I involve my children and their friends at different stages. Right from conceptualizing to writing to illustrating the books, I take inputs from them as they are the final users of our books. My biggest takeaway is that children are very bright, sharp and blunt. They give you a realistic feedback without any inhibitions. Some of the parents have shared with me that the children felt involved and an intimate part of the whole vacation because of the books. Reading about a destination and exploring it later is a fabulous experience for children. Not just that, they also enjoy the book once they’re back as they can share their memories and experiences with friends and family.”

There is more in store for those who are looking forward to *Little Travel Bug*. She explains, “2019 will see launch of two new destination specific guidebooks – Dubai and London. We are also working on more travel books to create enriching experiences for young readers and their parents.”

Kavita Gogate and her *Little Travel Bug* is a pioneering project filled with her love for travelling and passion to get kids love travelling and discovering new lands and lives. As actor and voice-over artist Jaime Lyn Beatty nicely put it, “Jobs fill your pocket, but adventures fill your soul.” **S**





Sapna Sarfare, Deputy Editor, Society, Nari Hira, Chairman, Magna Publications, Actor Govinda, Actress Mishika Chaurasia and producer Pahlaj Nihalani

He Came. He Saw.

The moment actor Govinda came to Magna office to launch *Society's* December issue, it was evident that he was still the superstar loved by everyone. Read about it to understand

The December 2018 issue of *Society* was launched by the enigmatic icon of all times, Govinda. The buzz at magna lounge was evident that day due to the prominent star's arrival. People crowded just to catch a glimpse of the man of the hour. The moment Govinda came in, the whole Magna office was charged and his jovial attitude put everyone at ease.

The event kick started on a pleasant note when Nari Hira, Chairman, Magna Publishing Co. Ltd and Sapna Sarfare, the Deputy Editor of *Society* along with Govinda, Pahlaj Nihalani and Mishika





He Conquered



Actor Govinda with his co-star and newcomer Mishika Chaurasia



Chaurasia unveiled the appealing December issue of *Society*. The cover of the issue highlights Govinda and his current film *Rangeela Raja*. While it covers various perspectives such as the censorship issues they faced, and the film, it also brings to the forefront the fact that Pahlaj and Govinda were working together after 25 long years. Our emcee, Manpreet Hora from *Stardust*, made sure the event and conversations flowed smoothly without a hitch.

Reminiscing about the past, Govinda shares his experience in working with Pahlaj throughout these years. "The present is definitely different and he has been better. He has introduced more than dozen stars to the film industry. They have done very well and I am one among them. I feel very proud to join Pahlaj once again. He has always given me hits," said Govinda.

The bond which they share is rare and it is evident from the dais itself. Pahlaj also shares similar thoughts about his *Rangeela Raja* star. "Govinda is the one and only person you enjoy while working. The respect and love which he used to give me from the first film has not changed in set till now. Though in real life we have changed and we are sharing it as friends. This time we are closer as friends. That is the only difference that has come in 25 years. I am glad to work with him again. Whatever we were asking him to do he has always given more than that. He has proved himself as an actor!" elaborated Pahlaj.

As comic Govinda's films are, in real life as well he energises the press conference with his comical comments. When a journalist asked how he managed to keep himself trim, a jovial Govinda replied, "There is no hard work behind that. My wife doesn't allow me to eat!"

When topic of *Rangeela Raja* being based on Vijay Mallya rose, Govinda explained "He said that he wanted to present a high lifestyle individual. It is better to copy Mr Mallya because he looks very graceful." To evade any wrong presumption that might occur due to this, he hastily corrected



himself saying, “I feel the same on a personal level. There is no political decision going on here. I like the idea! I said copying somebody who really looks nice is good. It is inspired. It has nothing to do with him. I would never do a film like that. We don’t want to take publicity that manner.”

On being questioned what the scenario will look like in the month of January as the film *The Accidental Prime Minister* is also being released on a similar date as *Rangeela Raja*, our actor gave a very nonchalant reply. “I never believed in confrontation! I don’t look towards right or left. I never had the time as well. And when I get the time, I never got the opportunity to look at any other film as the thought, method and style of the films I make is completely different compared to others. They are Govinda type films.”

The delay of *Rangeela Raja* was due to a lot of cuts being placed. This has clearly upset Nihalani a lot “I have never made films which require cuts,” he replied when a question was asked regarding the cuts placed. “The cuts which are given by the CBFC is very unjustified. Unfortunately since it was Diwali time, the chairperson was not available and the movie couldn’t go to therevising committee. I went to the court but it was not in my fate for the movie to get a release date on Diwali. CBFC has put a lot of hard work in inserting cuts in my film. All this was focused on me and not on the movie as the film does not have a reason to possess cuts.”

A well-rounded discussion ended and it was time for Govinda to leave with Pahlaj and newbie Mishika Chaurasia. And this is when we realised the true extent of Govinda’s stardom and the love he still holds amongst his fans. They just came in hordes in our premises and outside and for almost 15 minutes there was total chaos. It is all about being clicked with their loved Chi Chi. It was quite heart-warming to witness this love first hand. Our December issue launch was a bonafide hit. **S**

Peach Organza Jacket
with Collar Ruffles and Glass Bead
Tassels Combined with Raw Silk Off-
White Corset with Thread Work, Glass
Beads, Pearls and Cut-Danas and
Net Tulle Umbrella Skirt

Winter's Tale

Titled 'A' Laube', the winter festive collection by luxury
brand U/A is all about happiness that comes with new
beginnings and freshness of all that blooms.





Getting you ready for this season is quite easy with U/A, a luxury brand just for those looking for minimalist style and sophisticated details. The brand, under founders Udit Toshniwal and Ayesha Kalyaniwalla, have brought out their Winter Festive collection titled 'A' Laube'.

Discover Embroidered Organza jackets, Chiffon Slip dresses and delicate Net Lehengas in sunrise inspired colors like Honey Melon Yellow, Shaded Midnight, Majestic Magenta, and Shell Pink. Silhouettes are classically Indian yet do not adhere to traditions.

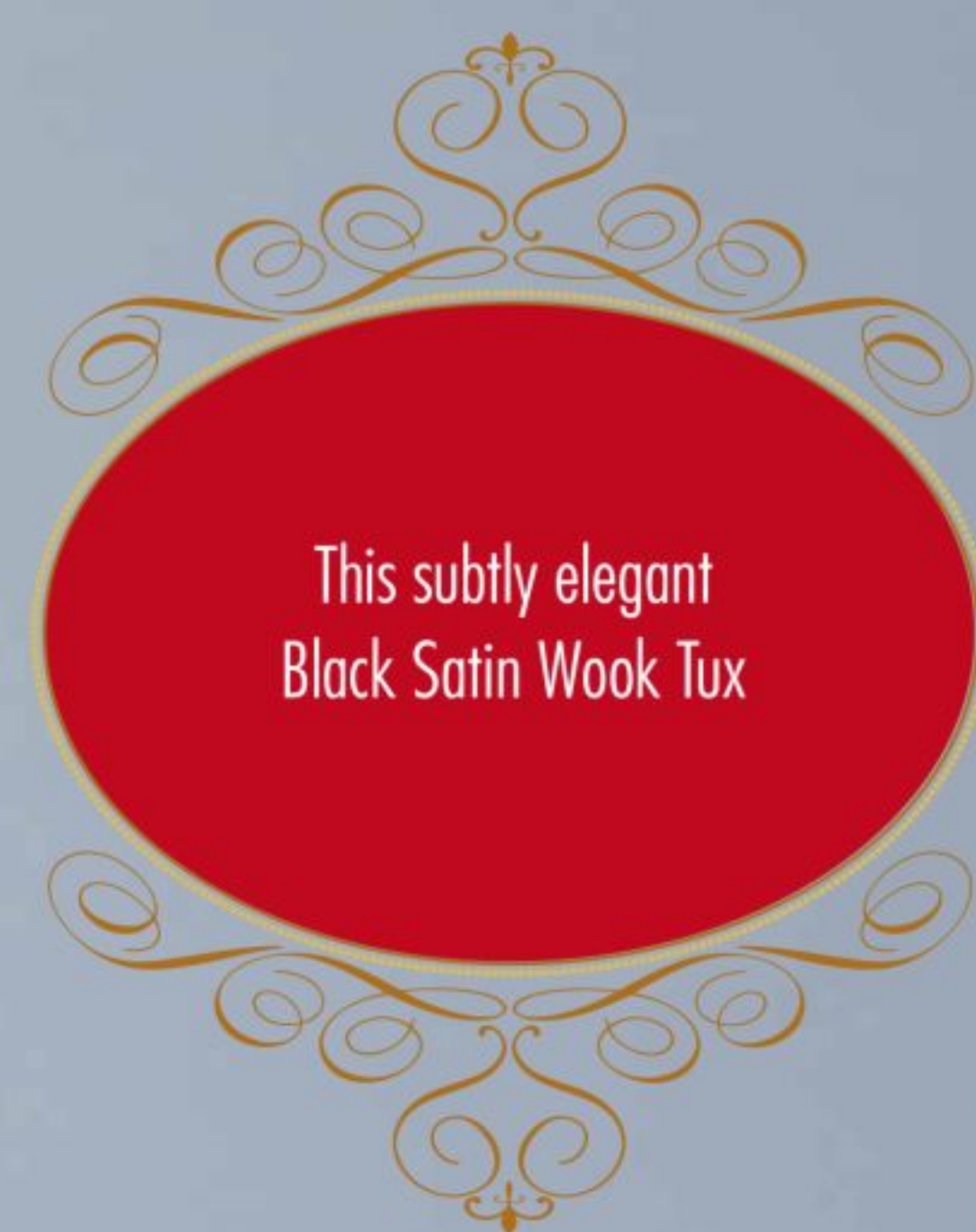
For men, you have long, crisp kurtas in the finest silk linen and jacquards. Tones of beige and browns, creams and mustards are combined with rich cotton and silk. They have used soft Chanderi silk kurtas lined with pintucks and stitch lines paired with an array of double-sided bandis. Customized bandhgala suits and sherwanis are also combined with the finest suiting wools stretch fabrics.





It's a Rose Lavender
Gown in Organza



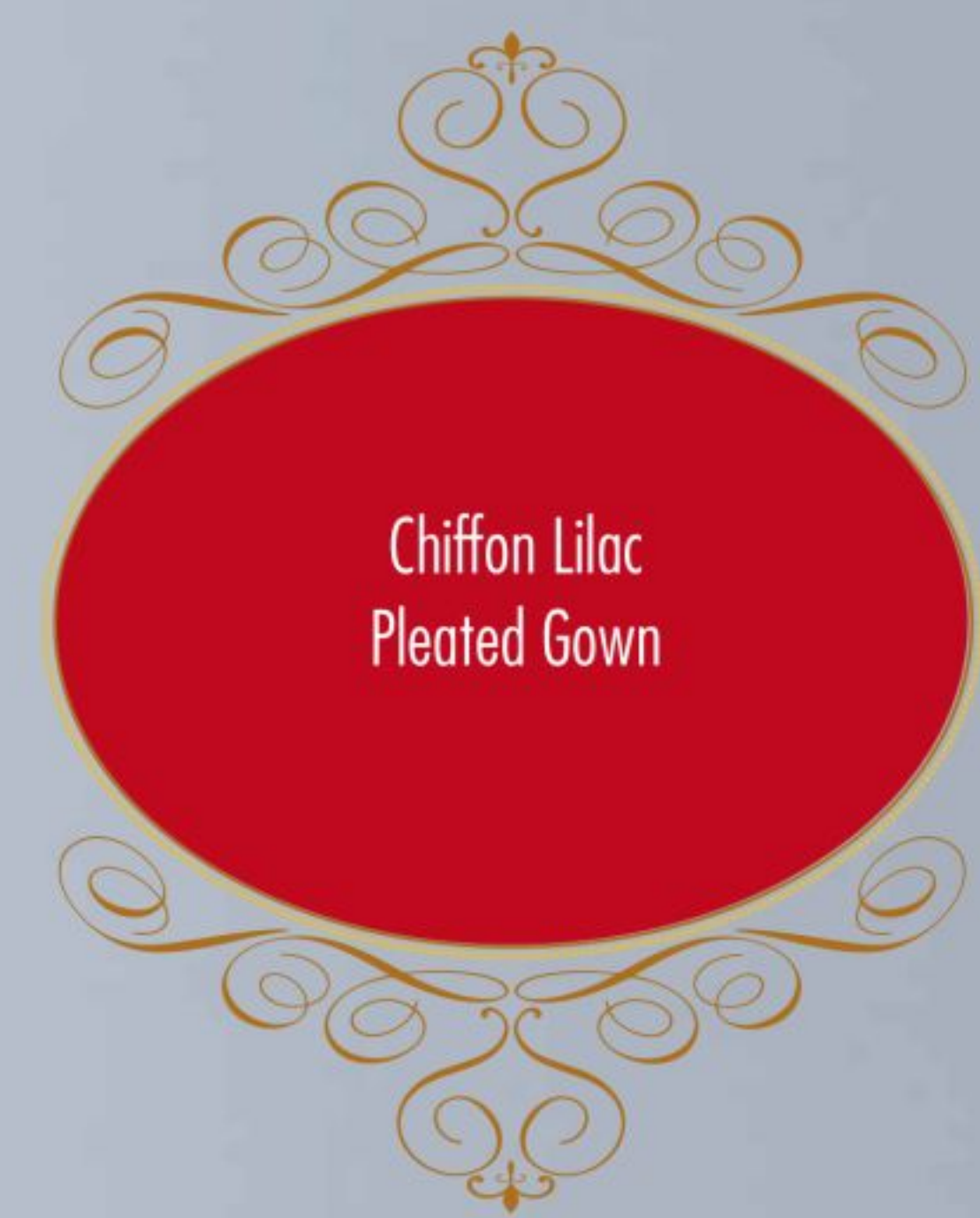


Double-sided Bandi in
Chalk Blue and Navy Blue Suiting
Wool paired with Chanderi
Silk Kurta with Pine Tucks
and Line Stiches



A Raw Silk Baby Blue
Unzipped Bomber Jacket Blouse with
Feathers is paired with Raw Silk Rose
Window Lehenga designed with Mother of
Pearls, Glass Cut Danas, Long Glass
Baguettes, Micro Pearls and Silk Thread
Work and Raw Silk White
Fish Scale Bustier





Chiffon Lilac
Pleated Gown



Beige Jacquard Sherwani
with Glass Cut Danas





Children *of* Heaven

They have proved their talent to be exceptional at a very young age. The time an ordinary child starts to learn an art, child prodigies have already come in par with the experts of the fields. *Society* interacts with some of the growing inspirations of the current times to understand their lives.

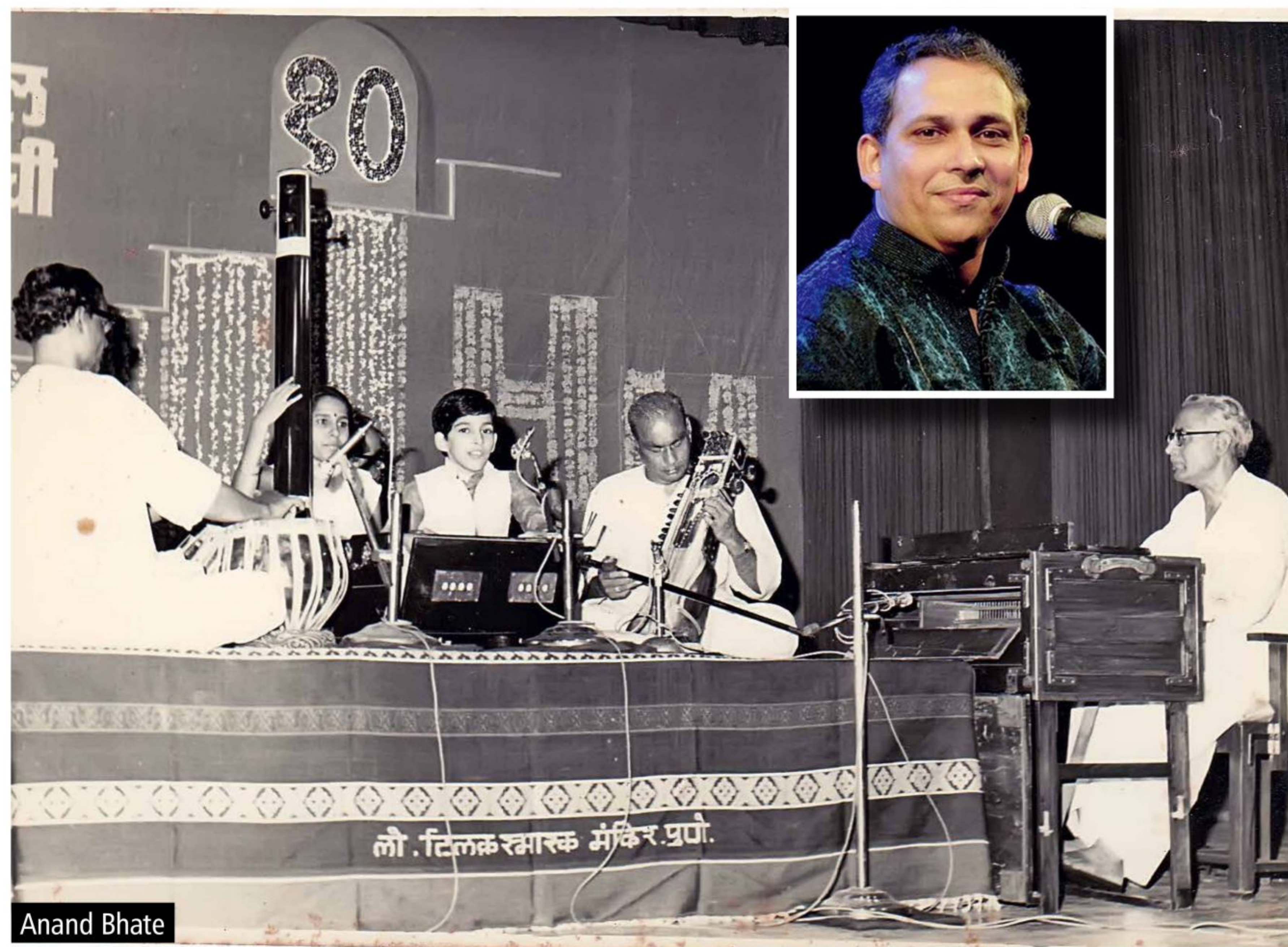
| By VANI KRISHNAN |



They start reading at the age of two when others barely attempt to walk. Their fellow mates gaze at them with envy when they receive appreciation on a daily basis. Their parents beam with pride an extra ounce more with the innate skills they possess. If you are amongst the latter then you weren't a child genius.

Most of these young kids start out at a very tender age to reach the expertise of a professional in their field. At the age of two, Lydian Nadhaswaram started taking an interest in drums. One would say at the age of two, the term taking interest would mean just tapping on the instrument and get a random tune. But if that was the scenario then he wouldn't be traveling the world performing at concerts. Some of the places he explored and performed included Malaysia and Australia. But if you search up Lydian Nadhaswaram, results would show his name to be more synonymous to piano. "When I was nine years old, my father showed me a YouTube video of a small boy playing the piano. I got inspired by him and started to play the piano," said the 13-year-old from Chennai. Lydian got inspired by his father Varshan, a music director. "I started my career as a musician only when I was 18. I had a guilty feeling that I started my career very late. I wanted both my children to start their career at an early age," Varshan explained "Since my thoughts, actions and perceptions are around those views, they also started their career early. It is not a surprise for me. Maybe for others it may be a surprise but I know that my children will be musicians."

Not just Lydian, Shorya Mahanot at the tender age of 12 is a worldwide renowned abstract artist. Every artist mostly seeks their inspiration from their roots. Likewise for Shorya, being from a family of artists, his sisters Shruti and Shreya stood as examples for him. As a kid of barely four years, he wanted to paint on the canvas with the paints and brushes. The family initially didn't entertain him and discarding it to be like every other kid's fascination. "We



tried to pacify him with crayons and sketch pens but he would settle for nothing else," elaborated Aditya, Shorya's father. "One day he sneaked into his sister's room and had his fun with colours on the canvass. When he came out he had colours all over him, we were rushing at him out of concern but when we saw what he had created on the canvas, we were taken aback."

Imagine the thought of glee which must have crossed his parents. From that day forth they encouraged him to paint with the tools of his discretion. "We showcased his works before some of the accomplished artists and authorities in this field and they shared our pleasure and astonishment over his talent and potential," explained Pushpa, Shorya's mother. "By God's grace, this medium itself reached out to him and feathers continued to get added in his cap."

A parent's role is very critical when it comes to a child prodigy. If they don't take a keen interest in development of their talented kid, chances are they won't excel in the future. It was Shayaan Udeshi's father, Suril who taught him the world of music at the age of three. When they saw him taking a high interest in the instrument, he was enrolled in Saptak School of Music.

"Tabla is my first love," exclaimed the eight-year-old when we asked him how much he adores his instrument. His first performance was at an exhibition namely, Ahmedabad Weekend Window when he was just five. Later he went on to play at TEDx Gateway as well. Any normal child would have the fear of playing a tune or two wrong. Shayaan too harboured the same fear but it wasn't as high as his parents. "The feeling of anxiety as a parent was extremely high. Imagine your five year old child is sitting on stage and trying to entertain people," laughed Chaitali, Shayaan's mother.

Since child prodigies have to focus a lot to develop their innate talents, they are at times home-schooled. This is mostly because the commitments of becoming an established artist take over and they are unable to manage it with their normal school timings. "Shorya's international schedule and commitments make it very difficult for him to fulfil his academic pursuits in the conventional sense. So we had to make arrangements for home-schooling for him," explained Aditya. "Sometimes he misses the academic rigors that his friends follow."

In the year of 2011 he started solo at Taj Mahal Palace hotel, Mumbai. He had

finished 100 artworks when he was merely four. In 2013, his paintings started receiving world-wide recognition when it was chosen as the best of Art Expo New York and auctioned for 2000 dollars. Later his work got featured at Holtzman Gallery for 5000 dollars. Being the world's youngest abstract artist who has his own signature style, he is now recognised internationally as 'India's Child Picasso.' Hence to adjust with his eventful schedule, home-schooling was a requisite.

Similarly to follow his passion Lydian also started home schooling and is placed at KM Music Conservatory that has been founded by legendary composer AR Rahman. Lydian directly went to Grade Five of piano. One would be compatible in completing this stage only after years of rigorous practice. Now after finishing Grade Eight, he is indulging in a diploma in piano namely ATCL at Trinity College of London. Being first national wide in both the grades was just a start.

Currently the young teen is collaborating with Rahman. To reach such high level of expertise, daily practice would be required.

Shayaan Udeshi



When questioned about his training routine, "Roundabout the clock music is the only routine," said Varshan. But there are some who manage with their school schedule. One amongst those is Shayaan who is managing regular schooling with his other external performances.

Allowing them to have a normal routine assists in maintaining that childish spark inside of them. Otherwise they might mature too fast priding themselves too much. This happens when the child is not able to handle or comprehend the pressure put by media as well. It is again the parent's responsibility to ensure that the small kid doesn't mature too fast for his age. "We are very discrete when it comes to Shorya's media exposure," explained Aditya. "We ensure that there is no undue pressure on him. We stay in a relatively small town of Neemuch, Madhya Pradesh. So it helps. He retains his innocence. Sometimes he can't understand what the fuss is all about. We ensure that he remains grounded."

Not just Shorya, Lydian can also be added in the list. Though his expertise pars equal to that of a professional who has practice over decades, he still harbours desires of a 13-year-old. When asked about his aspirations, apart from being a music composer for Hollywood, an enthusiastic Lydian replied, "I want to go to the moon along with my piano and I want to play Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*!"

This inborn childishness can be found not only with respect to dreams and

Lydian Nadhaswaram





aspirations but also when a congratulatory remark is passed. “The kind of pressure we understand and feel, they don’t feel that. He thinks it is very normal to say ‘Congratulations, you are doing really well’. He thinks everyone is being treated similarly,” laughed Shayaan’s mother Chaitali. “He does not consider him having done anything great. We also treat it with a ‘let it be’ attitude.” This kind of attitude should be encouraged in order to mould the child into a better person in the future.

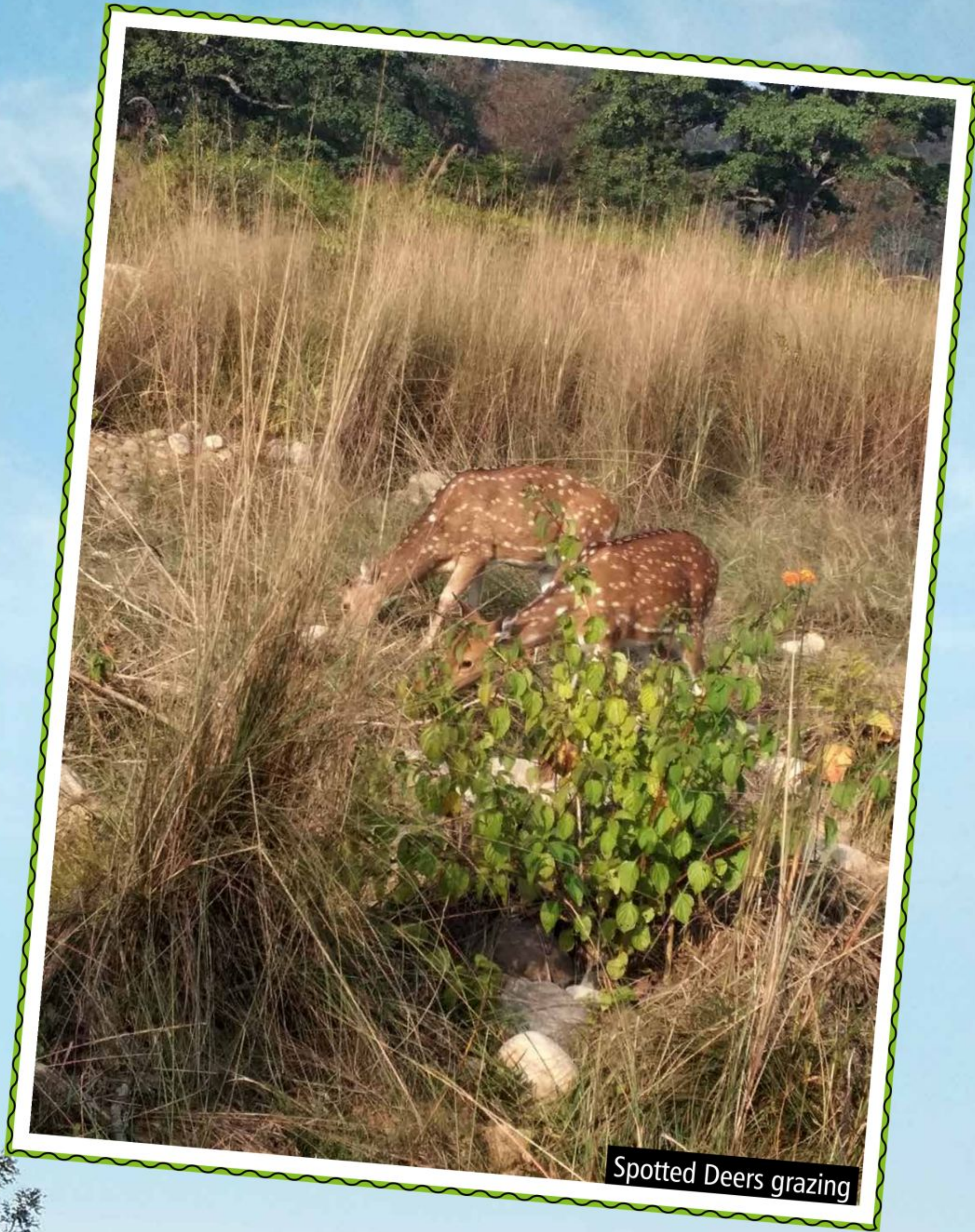
A parent’s role in the child’s future is a critical one. Being a child prodigy has its own advantages and disadvantages. He or she can easily sway in the wrong direction and end up taking decisions which have a negative impact on them. One striking instance can be of the American actress Tatum O’Neal. In 1974 at the tender age of ten, Tatum won an Oscar for her work in *Paper Moon*. But she later got negatively influenced and indulged in drugs. Now she lives a relatively subdued life.

Whereas an instance of a successful child prodigy would be Anand Bhatte who also had an atmosphere of music from his early days. At a very young age he was recognised by Pt Ravi Shankar and other renowned singers and musicians for his talent. His rendition of songs of renowned singing stage actor Balgandharva got him the label ‘Anand Gandharva’ at the age of 10. This now grown-up disciple of Bharat Ratna vocalist Pandit Bhimsen Joshi won the National Award for Best Playback Singer in 2011 for the Marathi film *Balgandharva*.

Reminiscing his earlier day, he highlights the significance of positive and negative influence on the child. “If somebody gets fame and recognition at a very young age and if it isn’t handled properly, it might actually hamper the progress of the child. They start thinking that they have achieved something. Looking back now I certainly realize that how my parents handled it very properly. They taught me in such a way that even though I was similar to a

celebrity in music at the age of ten, I had to complete my academics. That way I was able to complete my education, engineering and my M.Tech as well. Academics was given equal importance. At the same time even in the music field, they ensured that I continued to take education. Indian classical music is a long-term process. You cannot do one program and achieve fame. It is a long-term aspect. If you really want to learn music, you have to put in a few decades into this space. From that perspective it is absolutely important to keep on learning from your *guru* and keep on putting your own thoughts into it. Even if somebody’s praise is important in your childhood it should not affect your learning processes. The exposure is very good but children and parents should not accept it as a final goal. They should think it as a good platform to come in front of people.”

You never know what path these young minds may take. But we hope to see them with the same passion in the future. **S**



Calling CORBETT



No one leaves the opportunity to witness wilderness in all its glory at Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand. A visit to the gorgeous The Riverview Retreat, Corbett led us to appreciate a mesmerizing property along with an area that the legendary *shikaari* turned conservationist took efforts to preserve. Read to know why you should visit this retreat and the amazing national park.



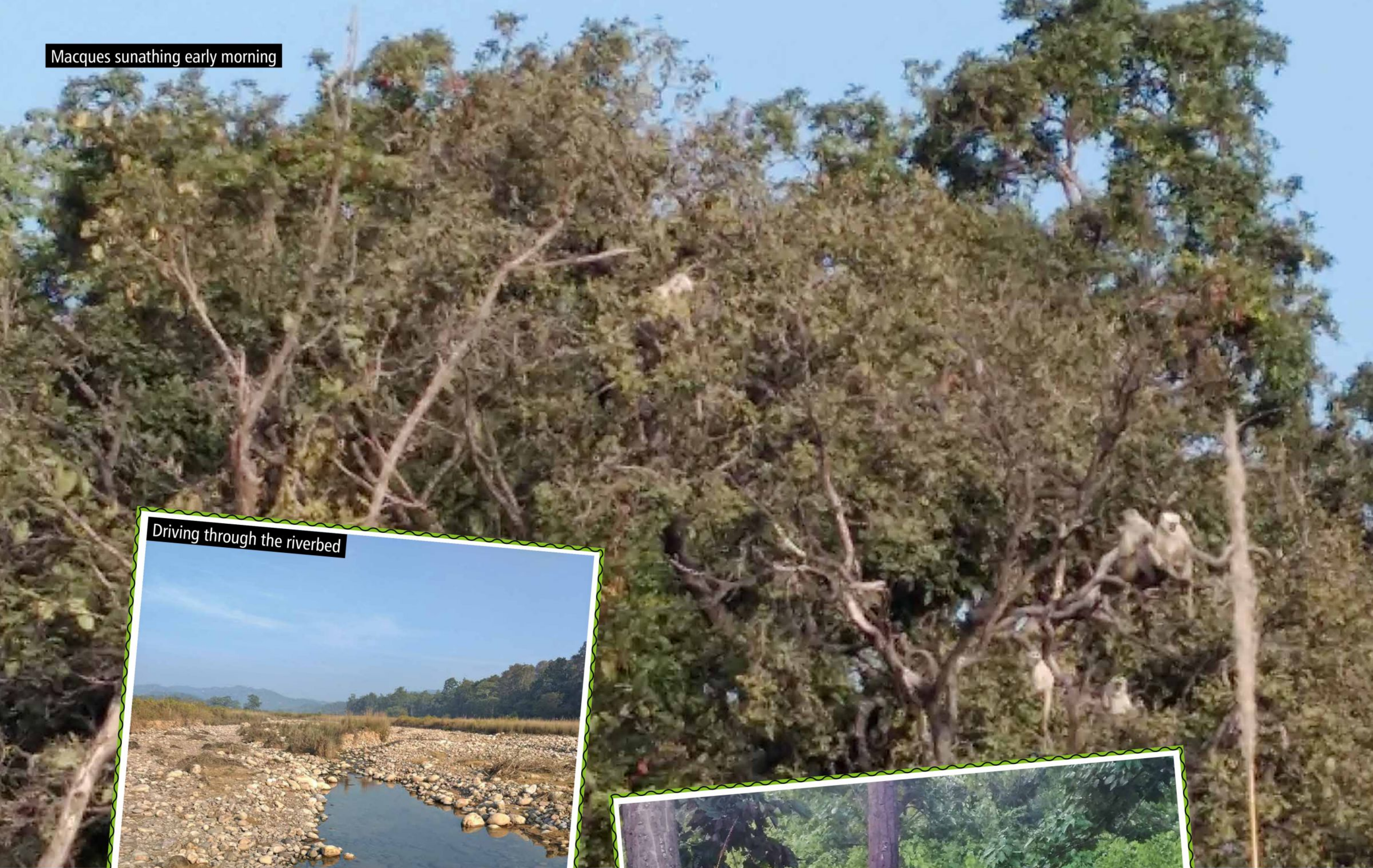
| By **SAPNA SARFARE** |

Mumbai is known for two distinct weather – pouring rains and humid sweaty hell hole, though the city in rains has charm of its own. And being more close to nature is something of a fantasy to most Mumbaiers, despite the Sanjay Gandhi National Park being right next door. There is

more to India than the cities. The India that resides in the forests is of a different kind. So getting an opportunity to find a place that is amidst green is like a dream come true.

The Leisure Hotels Group happens to be quite a huge name in Uttarakhand when it comes to hospitality. And it was their property in the renowned Jim Corbett

National Park called The Riverview Retreat that we got a chance to explore. But the options of having a relaxing great time was not limited to the property but extended to a safari of the acclaimed national park and the surrounding areas. One opportunity is enough to change our mind not just for the property but the treasures this place holds.



Driving through the riverbed



The elusive tiger spotted

THE TRAVEL DRAMA

An early morning flight from Mumbai to New Delhi was enough to put me and my fellow travelling journalist to be in a mix sleepy still excited mood. Reaching the chilly Delhi was quite easy and we were quickly taxied away to our destination.

Smoggy and polluted Delhi and its nearby areas was kind of reflective of the grave issues our capital is facing. As we slowly started edging away from the capital and moving through Uttar Pradesh

(UP) towards Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand, you will see the gradual green change that will keep you mesmerized.

A word of advice: while we took a slight longer route to the resort (travelling via Delhi-Gajraula-Moradabad-Kashipur-Rampur), you can reach it from other places too. Pantnagar is the nearest airport, while Lucknow, Dehradun and Nainital are few other places from where reaching this place is quite easy. Lucknow and Dehradun have

airports. Ramnagar is the nearest place with rail connection. Also the roads via our route were in the middle of some major highway construction plan near Delhi. So traffic jams might be an issue. Once completed, things will be better, we are informed.

On our way, we stopped at a famous eatery Moga Punjabi Tadka which is a landmark food joint in Gajraula. You must give it a try as you get some authentic Punjabi fare here at good rates. We resumed



our journey to reach our destination The Riverview Retreat at around 5 PM. The very sight acted as balm to our tired eyes.

ON ARRIVAL

What you see is a well-planned and laid-out resort which actually stays true to its name – The Riverview Retreat, Corbett. The view from one side of the property gives an unparalleled view of the serene Kosi River. You see a rather dense forest cover on the other side of the river with slightly low hills covered with foliage. We were informed that if lucky, we can see animals like deer come to drink water from the river.

Gradually on a two-day trip, we were given a slow introduction to the property. Being impressed would be a minor acceptance of the fact that the property owner's Leisure Hotels have done a good job of maintaining the natural surrounding along with adding a good touch of modernity.

The hotel group has a good reputation in Uttarakhand and also has other properties all over India.

We walked the neatly paved paths to see the rooms divided as per your requirement. They are part of cottages which are again divided as per requirements and pricing. The quaint cottages are something that attract your attention and are just the thing you need for a relaxed posh holiday. The place has 90 bedrooms which are divided into private villas of two, three and four bedrooms while some can even get independent and duplex rooms. You have private garden and entrances for each villas. Spacious is the word which came to my mind as I saw the rooms. We were provided with two bedroom villas that had luxury written in every corner. I am not kidding when I say the best of materials and facilities have been provided for those who want nature combined with luxury.

And yes, the peace that this whole property provides is incomparable. I doubt that it does not get quieter than this place. One of the amusements (the inner child in me is very much alive) I was trying to find here was having the night's quietness broken by the roaring of the tiger or finding a wild animal outside the room trying to get a peek into our temporary abodes. Alas, it remained a fantasy.

Did I mention the fact that this trip was in winter? Winters in Uttarakhand wilderness is something to experience. Unless you are used to this weather or are a polar bear, mortals like me will have to bring adequate winter wear that includes thermals. The temperatures really drops and handling the nip in the air would be tough for those whose idea of chilliness is blast coming from the fridge.

Food is of course an important element of any travel. Again this retreat gets my



Interior of the Jim Corbett Museum

full attention and points. They have two options for anyone who wants to eat with the nature or predominantly indoors. The Grill House Restaurant and Bar near the very inviting swimming pool is the retreat's popular eating destination and has a round open machchan-like structure.

At Gurney House from where you can see the Kosi River in all its glory, is where you will be given your breakfast, lunch and dinner. It offers Indian, Mughlai and continental food here and I admit the food here was to die for. Each day we saw quite a spread during each time of the day which tempted us. They offered a small spread of local Kumaoni food that appealed to my simple taste-buds. This local cuisine offers simple meals but packed with great tastes. If you want sumptuous food that satisfies your soul,

Kumaoni food is your kind of cuisine. In fact, move out and try out the authentic cuisine as much as you can. We got to try out the items like 'Bhatt ki Churkani' and 'Geheh' with ghee-laden rotis.

Being close to nature and not exactly close to any major cities, it means that coming to retreat has a way to make you more in tune with your surroundings. The retreat has all possible facilities of the new-age world but you are still amidst nature with its silence letting you get close to your thoughts. The retreat provides ways to keep you entertained. They have great facilities to provide every kind of safaris and trips at the national park, apart from specialized trips (if you inquire) in and around Corbett and

events and programmes at the retreat. You have special things organised for everyone, right from kids to adults. The place is quite popular for corporate events. Coming back to special events planned as per popularity and needs, a small documentary on Jim Corbett gave us a fascinating peek into the life of this legendary shikari. No wonder, the people in Uttarakhand love him so much. Later two locals came with guitar in tow and sang some great Hindi film songs. They were indeed a great mood changer.

Day one went in travelling to the retreat, checking out the place and seeping in as much information about the place from Shiv Mehan, COO, Leisure Hotels Group and Ajay Kareer, General Manager (GM),



Jim Corbett's Museum in Kaladhungi

Riverview Retreat, Corbett. Both played the perfect host. We felt at peace with being amidst nature and despite the chill and certain tiredness, sleep came to us as easily as a fish takes to water. We were told that the retreat offers peaceful sleep without worries. We did take it with a pinch of salt but later realised we were told the truth.

We were also more excited for the next day to rise as we had a safari planned to the Jim Corbett National Park the next day. The early bird catches the worm and early risers are able to check out the wild animals including tigers if we reach a little before sunrise. Peaceful stay and a chance to connect with your fellow earth dwellers... well, who needs a city life?

THE CORBETT CHRONICLES

So at 5.45 am in the morning, my fellow travelers along with me gathered at the retreat's porch and sleepily got into the special safari jeep to travel in the dark at the park entrance. For those unaware of the national park, it is divided into various zones which have slightly different and some similar terrains. The whole park is not open for tourists and only few zones which are marked for tourists can be travelled to only with authorized guides. The zones are open to the public during certain seasons and not all are jeep safari zones. Limited people and jeeps are allowed inside for a certain time only.

We were in the Bijrani Zone which is a popular zone for seeing a variety of

wildlife including the elusive tiger. Also, a word of advice would be using your intelligence to not step out of the jeep unless being told to. This is still a forest area with wild animals around. They cannot be held responsible for your stupidity. Making loud noises and screaming and unnecessary hand movements are also not acceptable. Also carry your government authorized identity card with you (you will be told to by the hotel). If you forget, then you lose the chance of entering. Yes, they are quite strict about these things. Safari bookings are done in advance. Speak to your hotel regarding this before you travel to the said reserve.

After going through the said procedures, trying not to freeze in the cold weather and



Trilok Singhji with Jim Corbett's gun



The original chaupal in Chhoti Haldwani

renting binoculars for Rs 100, we entered the reserve with excitement. I realised that me and my fellow travelers wrapped up in layers looked like a certain muffler man of Indian politics. You picture us now. Like many others, we entered with the need to see the tiger in the wild roaming about in his territory without any fear. Again a word of advice from a nature lover – even if you are not able to see the tiger, do not get disappointed. The park is a beautiful place with gorgeously soothing foliage and varied animals that call this place their home. You see various types of deer, birds, wild boars, monkeys, elephants and so on. If you want to see paradise, then this place does qualify. Also if you are able to see a tiger, chances are he or she is returning for rest after a night out in his or her territory looking for prey. Tigers are nocturnal cats who hunt in the dark. If you distract it or make noise, the tiger will disappear in no time and you will be left disappointed.

Our guide Narendraji turned out to be an ace guide whose instincts and guiding skills were perfect. Within seconds of deciding on a route, we spotted a tiger

walking amidst the grass and trees. We stood in our jeep mesmerized at the magnificent beast that stood before us yet was hidden. In fact, we were the first ones and amongst the few to spot a tiger that day. Narendraji tried guessing the tiger's gender and age and was keeping us updated on his movements. But the tiger was probably not in a mood to be the centre of attraction and again seconds later sprinted out of sight into oblivion. We did hear him roar a bit a little later along with the cries of sambar deer and barking deer. These two deer breeds are known to sense the presence of a tiger nearby and give a warning cry to others of it being around. Now we could see the reserve in peace.

Time and again, I wish to advise any prospective traveller coming in this part of the country to enjoy the peace it has to offer. Noisy behaviour coupled with loud movements of a typical city dweller should be left behind. Nature's beauty lies in the quiet and solitude it offers with the lush greenery.

Our driver with Narendraji was making a point to take us in every nook and corner of

the reserve showing us the animals that call this place their home. We took the rough road that went through some dense forest areas, dried up river beds or with lower water levels and grasslands. The varied terrain played hide and seek with the sun that had slowly risen to dispel the cold and spread light. Sunlight kissing our cheeks combined with blue sky and fresh air made me realise that city bred people need to come to such places for a real breath of oxygen. We saw the crested hawk eagle perched on top of a desolate tree while just nearby a group of macaques were perched on a tree sunbathing. It was quite an amusing and sweet sight to see. Spotted deer were seen quite frequently while we missed seeing wild boars and elephants that too frequent this part of the park. I found it sad that a few of the tourists were dozing off in the jeep. A sight offered here cannot be found anywhere and not spotting a tiger does not mean you don't look at the other sights. Waking up early can be an issue but it is worth the experience.

Chatting with Narendraji about the animals, the park, changing scenario of



Girija Devi Temple

the region along with the whole Uttarakhand, the localities and so on was an eye-opener. People in this area are not allowed to reside inside the park and the few staying there will be relocated in near future. There are spots in the park where you can stay for the night after reservation. Hotels are known to offer various kinds of safaris to enjoy the terrain. Just inquire a bit further to enjoy the place.

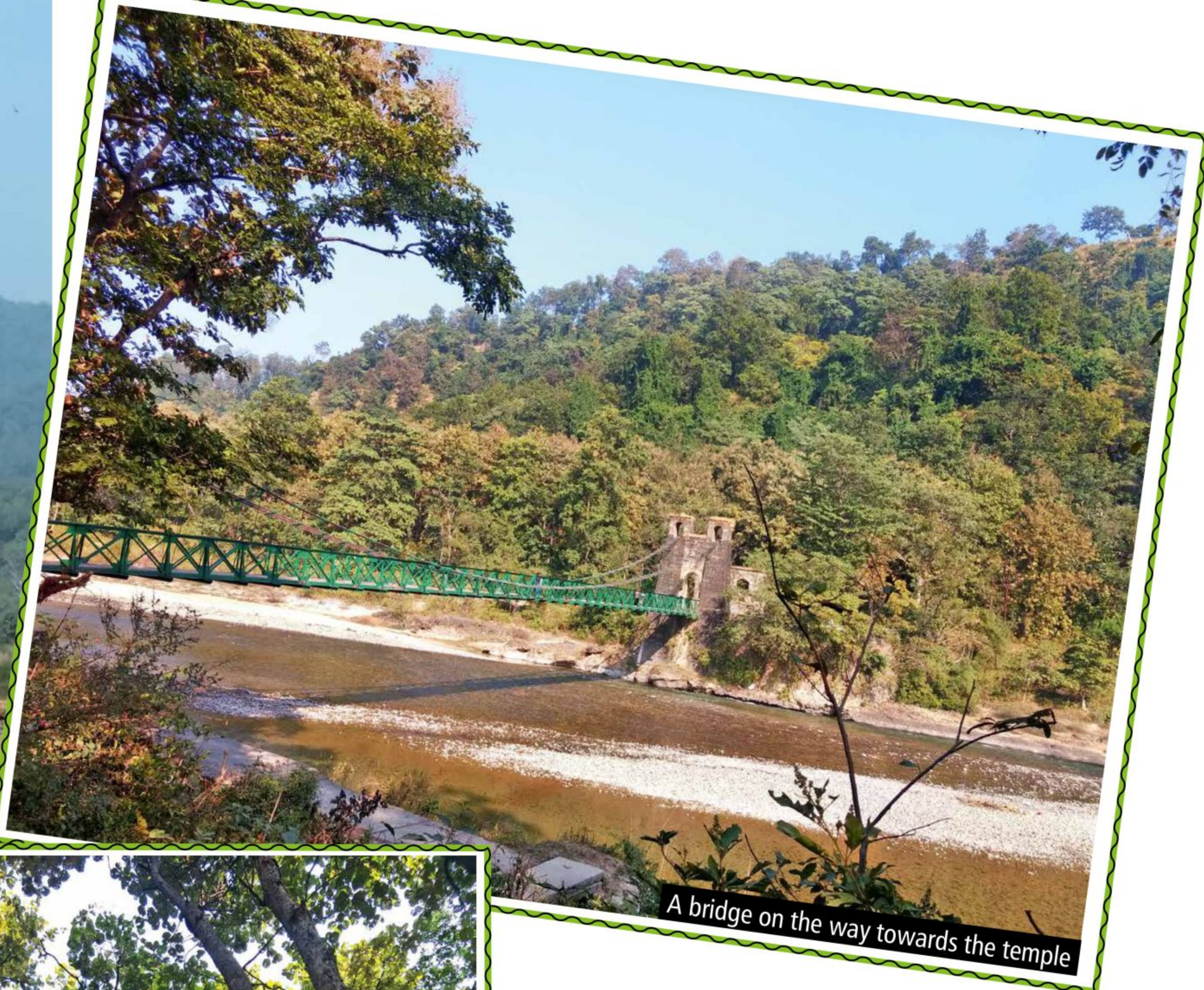
Those staying in the surrounding areas are frequent victims of tiger, leopard or other wild animal attacks and are sometimes killed too. Spotting a tiger, leopard or wild elephant nearby is as normal as seeing cattle. We are told that the tiger population here is rising and is the highest amongst all the national parks. Leopards are quite the intelligent and adaptive and are more of a threat than a tiger. They are known to enter homes and attack and unlike man-eating tigers, a man-eater leopard never loses its fear of the human beings.

We returned to our hotel all happy at the treasures that fell into laps and being able

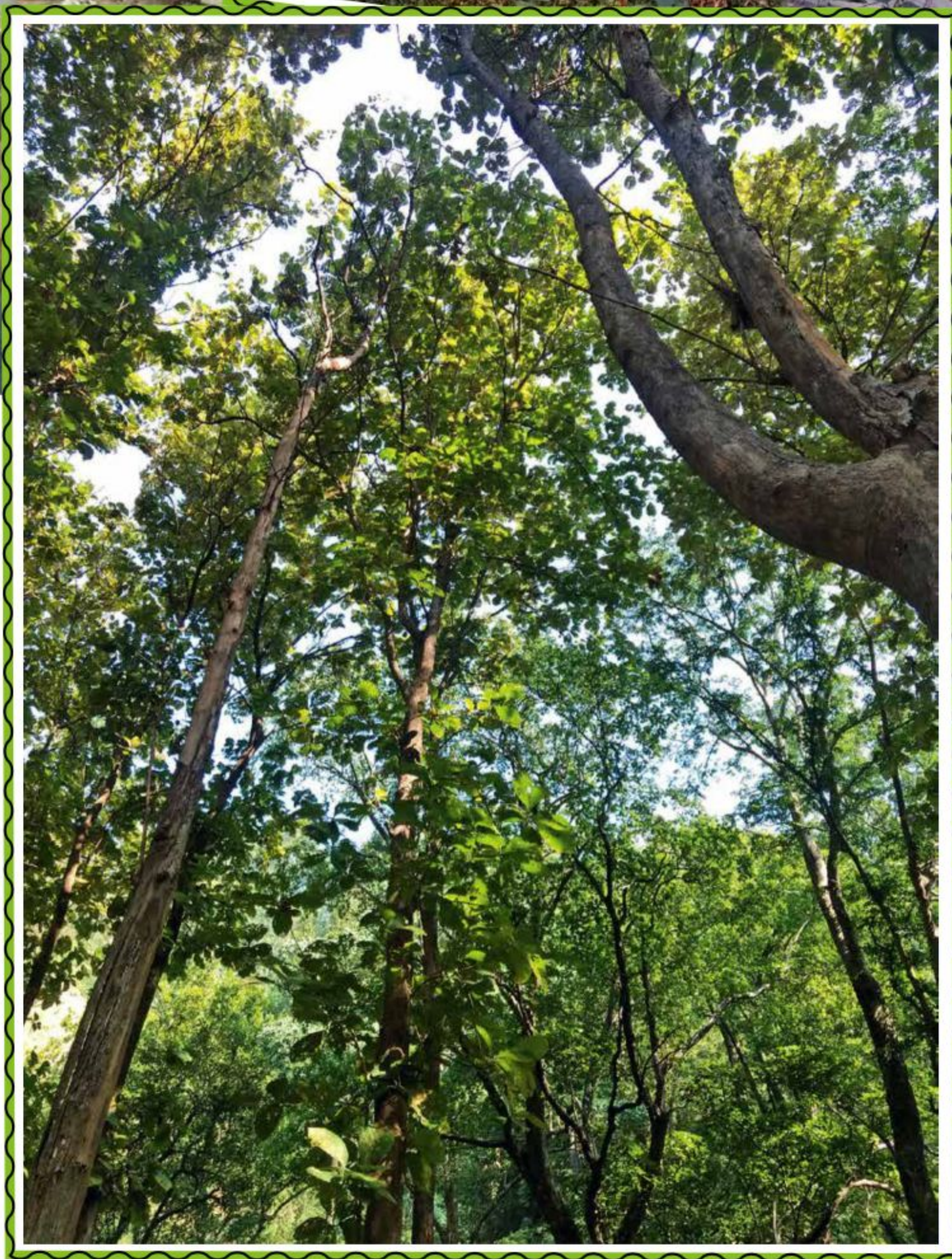
to be one with nature. We were fortunate to have a wonderful and cheerful guide like Narendraji to show us around.

MAKING A DARSHAN

Once back, a sumptuous breakfast (more of a brunch) waited for us. The Riverview Retreat just knows what the guests want. And again our stomachs were satisfied and we went to take a bath. Our next part of a different darshan was planned. We went to the nearby Girijadevi Temple which is quite popular amongst the people in and around Uttarakhand. This popular temple



A bridge on the way towards the temple



is a Shakti shrine located in the middle of the Kosi River on top of a rock which got eroded during a flood. What you see now is a kind of tall structure in the middle of the river on which the temple stands erect.

While you can reach the place via a road leading to the temple premises after which you need to walk, our guide Mohanji preferred a slightly longer walk via a bridge, narrow path leading up to a unusual darshan of the temple. You need to then walk down to the river bed which will lead right up to the temple. The walk itself is quite mesmerizing and you get the sights and sounds of the river which is slightly small during winters. At some points, the river looks clear and green and you can actually see the numerous fishes that call the Kosi River their home. A word of warning – fishing is banned in Uttarakhand. This is done to preserve the delicate river fauna of the state. In case you are allowed, it is for catch and release. Mahseer, a well-known fish in this part, is endangered and so fishing is limited. We suggest you have proper knowledge of the fishing rules before you try your hand.

Mohanji turned out to be another encyclopedia of information on the surroundings. He kept regaling us with tales

of *shikaar*, leopard and tiger sightings, the people, the local thinking, food and more. We kept on asking him things and he was more than happy to talk. Ask around and the knowledge you get from the locals will only make you richer in every way. The flora and fauna that dotted to pathway towards the temple and beyond needs to be felt. The mountain ranges beyond the temple are famous for treks. In fact, in recent times, leopard attacks have been frequent. So while you are here, foolhardy daredevilry should be kept in control. There is still jungle *raj* in these areas.

A cup of chai and lots of chat later, we returned to our soothing retreat where we had a light lunch. We returned to our rooms where we relaxed before setting out with the enthusiastic GM Kareerji to eat the winter specialty of the region. Made only during winters, *Kachri* is quite a popular staple made out of singhara flour, onions, loads of butter and other simple stuff. We were taken to Bablooji who is well-known in and around Ramnagar for this. In fact he sells it so fast that you will be disappointed soon. You need to be here and eat here to know what this delight is all about. While returning, we collected the famous sweet from Uttarakhand, *Baal Mithai* from Rawat Sweets. It is another must from this region, though you can find it a bit sweet, heavy and chewy. But those with sweet tooth can have a little bit once in a while.

On our return, we were treated to a good dinner and drinks (courtesy a well-stocked bar) which also included local Kumaoni specialties. Before our dinner, we had a session with a local animal expert who gave a brief on the wildlife that could be found in the jungle. Do ask for this session before you head to the safari as it might be of help in understanding the jungle better. The session was both informative and interesting.



Savitri Gajraulla



Organic farming in Mankandpur

LAST DAY IN PARADISE

Being in paradise on such a small notice is so unfair. Before we could say 'Love you The Riverview Retreat', it was time to leave for Delhi. Thankfully our flight was a late night one and so we were provided with some tour of other resort properties around The Riverview Retreat. We were taken to show two other properties leased out to other groups. The Taj Corbett Resort and Spa, Uttarakhand can be called a typical high-end Taj property – well-maintained and complete with premium facilities. We enjoyed a sumptuous breakfast in the outdoor seating which like The Riverview Retreat, was besides the Kosi River. We also made a tour of the Club Mahindra Corbett Resort, a sparser but still well-maintained place seemingly popular amongst families

CORBETT NAMA

Our visit is not complete if we do not visit Jim Corbett's home in Kaladhungi. It is now a museum dedicated to a legend who probably made us fall in love with nature, tigers, shikars and jungle lore. The drive down to the place is as scenic as you can imagine. You weave in and around the hilly terrain dotted with trees.

This home turned museum which he shared with his sister is a simple early colonial style bungalow that is characteristic of any hill stations developed by the British. Surrounded by greenery, you see a lot of stuff belonging to the hunter turned conservationist still well-preserved in this place. You also will see information regarding the life of the man well-marked all over the bungalow. Visiting this place is a must if you have come to the safari. If interested, get some local mementoes from the shop in the vicinity that stocks everything from local products to books on Corbett and Uttarakhand.

A short distance away is Chhoti Haldwani, a village that Corbett had brought. He took care of the place along with locals who settled here. After independence, he left India but bequeathed the village to the villagers. The well-planned village showcases the foresight of the man and the original *chaupal* is still well-kept. We met Trilok Singhji whose father was Corbett's right-hand man. In fact, he still has the gun gifted to his father by Corbett. He readily posed for us and spoke fondly of the man.

After a quick meet and a fond goodbye, we went further to an interesting tourist haven. Pawalgarh is THE place to visit as it is the site



Forest Rest House, Pawalgarh

where the famous Bachelor of Pawalgarh was killed by Corbett. The Forest Rest House located here in the middle of Sitabani forest has the tree where the tiger was killed. This Bachelor of Pawalgarh was the biggest tiger ever shot by Corbett and had terrorized the region before being hunted by him in 1930. After the post-mortem, it was found that he was in fact not a man-eater that was earlier claimed and a remorseful Corbett left hunting and turned towards conserving the forest and its true dwellers. It was the turning point that made him the legend he became.

GO ORGANIC

Our partner in crime in seeing the real Uttarakhand, GM Kareer had another surprise in store for us. After seeing a quaint water-run windmill that was actually a flour mill, we went to meet Savitri Garjaulla who manages an organic farm in Mankandpur village that is now a byword for organic farming. She happened to be the first one to start organic

farming in the region and is dedicated to it. In fact, this powerhouse woman now advises others from in and around Uttarakhand regarding organic farming. We visited her to understand what it is all about and ended the wonderful trip with some quaintly simple yet delicious Kumaoni food.

If you come (and I am sure you would come) to The Riverview Retreat, have them organise a trip to her place where for a nominal amount, you get to feel and eat organic life. Her information and work leaves you speechless and you feel what you offer in money is so less than what she really offers you.

After a good meal, the drive back to the retreat was equally thrilling. Zigzagging through rivers and forest areas, we came face to face with a herd of wild elephants that were doing their own thing and trying to cross the road. Temperamental creatures, one needs to be careful as they are capable of attacking at whim and running behind



you with great speed despite their size. Do not take these gentle giants lightly.

Once at the retreat, we realised that it was time to leave this paradise and return to Delhi as quickly as possible to catch an early morning flight. The two days of pleasant solitude coupled with some superb service and prime hospitality had charmed us. The Riverview Retreat, Corbett, owned and developed by Leisure Hotels stayed true to their group's motto – experience 'more'. What we really experienced here was more of nature, eco-friendly stay paired with luxury and true hospitality. Come here to feel the refreshing life offered here and also experience the park and Uttarakhand in its true sense.

With a heavy heart, we bade good bye to the retreat and disappeared into the dark night on the highway towards the city. Normalcy never felt so morose. Suddenly I understood what Jim Corbett meant when he wrote the following in his book '*The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*': There are events in one's life which, no matter how remote, never fade from memory. **S**

Taking off his Golden 70s in Style

Dr M is a conscientious visionary, entrepreneur, philanthropist, multi-faceted billionaire and a mindful leader. The man who is inspiring youth to be the change, is also a conscious capitalist working towards elevating humanity through business. He founded the Global Citizen Forum to realise his dream of 'One World' beyond religion, nationality, gender and boundary. A man of such grandeur is ought to have a larger than life celebration of his 70th birthday and he does nothing less. We bring you a glimpse of this 'World Event'...



Dr M with Veena Modi

1 PR in New Delhi was visible and audible from moon on 2nd January, 2019 as Dr M stepped into his golden 70s by an extravaganza as big as his stature. An event so large that it couldn't be put in a single day and thus spread to 5th and 6th January to everyone's joy. The celebrations started with the gathering of ambassadors and industrialist from international organizations and unfolded into multi-celebrity glam event. Raveena Tandon was a special guest of honor at the event.

Some stellar performance by Sunil Grover, Sanjeeda Sheikh, Nora Fatehi, Sana Khan, Karishma Tanna, Tia Bajpai, Aparna Dixit, Amit Mishra, Shraey Khanna and team mesmerized all the guests throughout the days. Fun and frolic doubled with the hosting of Modi Parivaar Awards for celebrating and appreciating love and strong bond among all the members of the Modi family.

Dr M who has always been a visionary shared his thoughts on 'India in 2050' and motivated all to be productive, healthy and live a meaningful life. Dr M was even presented with an award in the field of peace by the WFUNA official.

As this was something he is loved for, Dr M was honored by 'Best boss Award' by his loving staff. The event captured so many beautiful moments that its memories will last for a lifetime in the hearts of all attendees.



Dr M cutting his birthday cake

ADVERTORIAL



Dr M with Veena Modi



Dr M with Raveena Tandon



Dr M with Bettina Schweiger



Dr M with Onkar Anwar



Sana Khan, Bettina Schweiger and Karishma Tanna



Dr M with A K Merchant, Meher Master Moose and Taj Hamad



Dr M with Navin Kaul



O P Dani, Dr M and Umang Das



Kavita Malhotra, Ratan Koul, Sanjeeda Sheikh, Sana Khan and Karishma Tanna



Dr M with Sunil Grover



Nikhil Rungta, Ritika Rungta, Divya Modi, Rishabh Tongya, Mrs Veena Modi, Siya Modi, Sonali Modi, Taarush Rungta and Samar Tongya

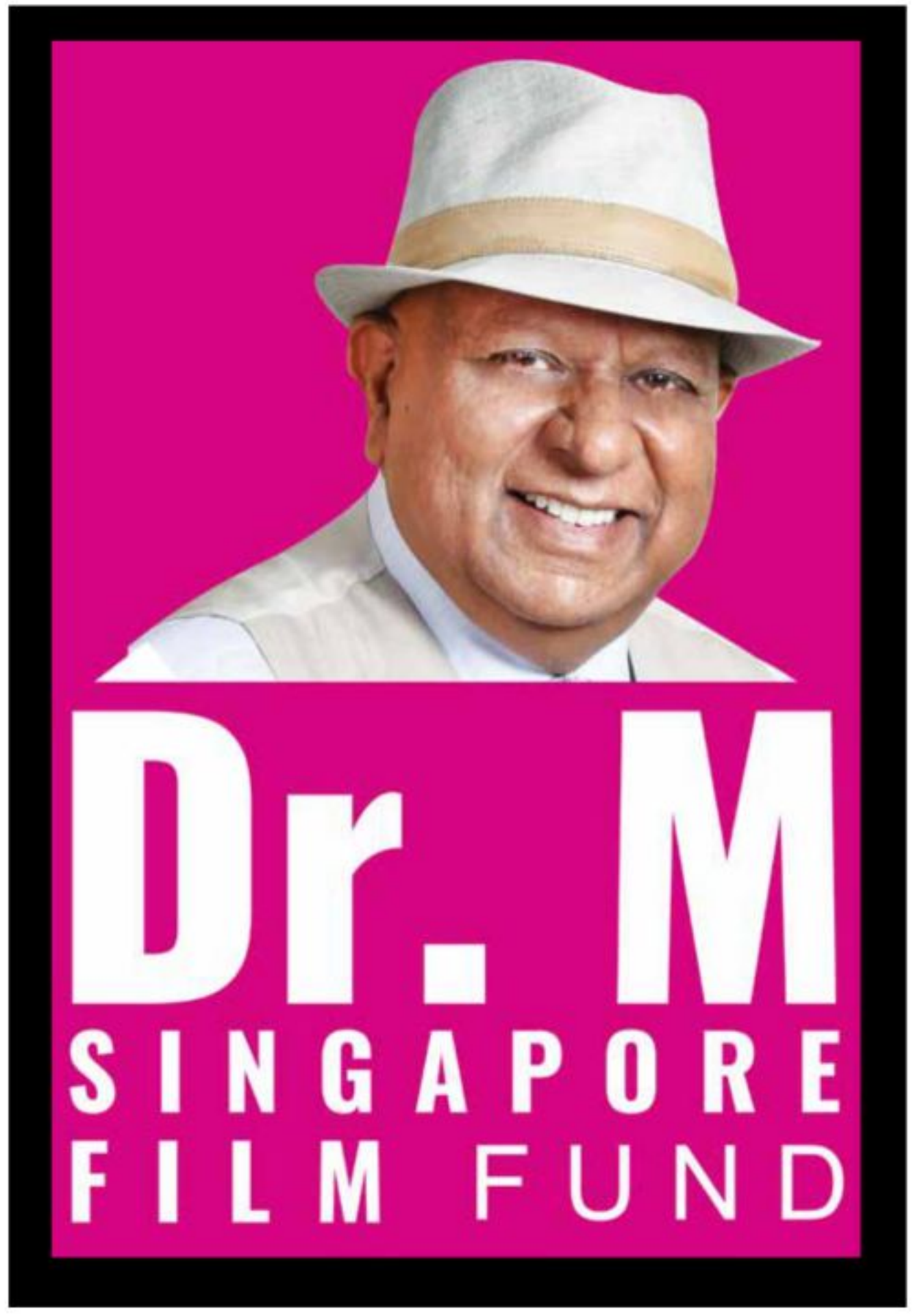


Dr M with sister Mrs Rajkumari Agarwal



Ashish Saraf, Sangita Jindal, Gauri Shriya, Dr M and Shraey

ADVERTORIAL



Dr M with Raveena Tandon



International Performers



Nora Fatehi



Dance performance by students of Dayawati Modi School



Tia Bajpai

Anand Sahu, Shazia Ilmi, Isaac Malekar, Dr A K Merchant, Dewan Syed Ali Khan, Nawal Kishore Das, Bhikkhu Sangsen, Jain Munni Lokesh, Chidanand Saraswati, Mrs. Veena Modi, Dr M, Dilip Modi, Taj Hamad, Meher Master Moose



Amit Mishra

STREAMINGGO

All that's new, exciting and you shouldn't miss on streaming channels.

| By **RAHULPAUL** |

Series (Thriller)

NETFLIX

YOU

Love comes in all shades and so do people but only if we all had mastered psychology enough to figure them out. Also most of us are putting every detail of our life on social media to seek validation from others. *You* is all about taking



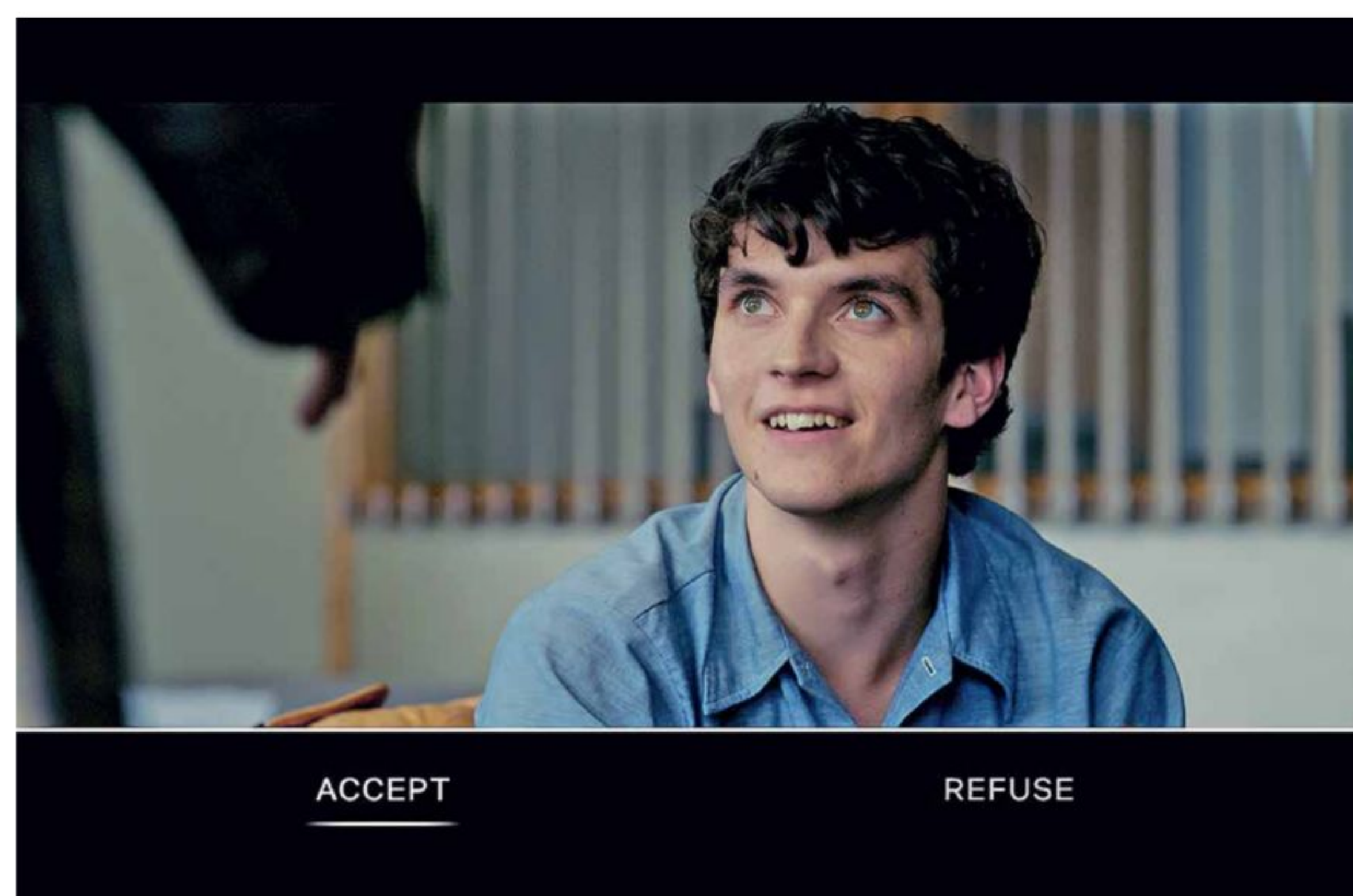
advantage of above situations and stalking through online aids by disturbed characters. Joe will go to any extent to make Beck love him and 'any' here is not limited to killing. The characters talking to themselves in the series gives great insights into them which feels like reading a book, a very interesting one. Recommended!

Movie (Thriller)

NETFLIX

BLACK MIRROR: BANDERSNATCH

This is next level of film viewing experience where you can actually decide what the protagonist will do through the click of your fingers on the options given on screens. Though the



story is not that gripping for which the *Black Mirror* brand is known for. This one is only for the unique immersive experience which surely will get the subscribers list rolling for the streaming giant.

Movie (Drama)

ZEE 5



TIGERS

Based on a real story, *Tigers* narrate the tale of a MNC selling baby food products in Pakistan which caused several casualties in several areas. Emraan Hashmi as the protagonist goes through a roller coaster ride of characters from being a struggling salesman of local medicines to a successful employee of the MNC and upon realisation of truth, plays the brave man who goes all out to expose the scandal. The movie also features some real footage of children suffering in the hospital which is not an easy sight to watch. The movie scores best in staying realistic and sticking to the facts instead of sugar coating them for cinematic purpose.

Series (Reality)

7 DAYS OUT

Seven of the biggest events in the world like the Kentucky Derby, Chanel's Haute Couture Fashion Show, League of Legends Esports Championship, etc. and what happens a week leading to the day is the concept of *7 Days Out*. The preparation, pressure, emotions, problems and a team of dedicated people make a great experience to view. The interview of the people in the real time is definitely a big plus of the show. Also it's amazing to realise that though the events might differ from each other, what goes into the making is almost the same. Truly fascinating and a must watch.



NETFLIX

Movie (Sci-fi)

BIRD BOX



Bird Box has less to do with a bird box and more with an invisible alien species that persuade humans to commit suicide in the most brutal way if looked at. A group of people seek shelter in a home to survive the apocalypse but the calamity is bigger and complicated than they thought. Sandra Bullock as one of the survivors tries to find a more effective solution to the problem by taking a voyage along with two little blindfolded children and a bird box to an unknown place that offers hope on a boat. The movie keeps you on the edge and because of children involved you'd be praying even pleading for a happy ending.

NETFLIX

Series (Comedy-Drama)

SEX EDUCATION



Sex is not an under discussed topic among American teenagers but sex education, however, is a not a seriously discussed topic and often just dismissed after one 'talk' from parents. Though that doesn't mean the youngsters don't suffer through the problems and as they are left unattended, the problems become more psychological. That's where Otis, son of a single sex therapist mother, comes into the picture who helps them deal with their sexual-psychological problems. The series is not just about sex and therapy but covers a lot of other significant issues that arise in life of student in high school. Watch for insights but maybe not for sex advice, personal counselling is advised.

NETFLIX

Richa Chadda and Ali Fazal



Farhan Akhtar and Shibani Dandekar



Manjot Singh



WHO'S NEXT?

GET THE NEW YEAR STARTED

THE EXTRAVAGANT wedding of Trishant Sidhwani and Prerita Puri took place in Powai, Mumbai. The three day occasion was graced by celebrities like Ali Fazal, Richa Chadda, Farhan Akhtar, Shibani Dandekar, Manjot Singh, Raveena Tandon and Anil Thandani.

Newly-weds Trishant Sidhwani and Prerita Puri with Raveena Tandon and Anil Thandani



Ben Vestey and Tom Hudson



Peter Prentice, Torquhil Campbell and Mehrnavaz Avari



Malcolm Borwick and Alexandra



Maharaj Gaj Singh of Jodhpur and Lady Katharina Chelsea



Jaisal Singh and Radhika Varma



Matteo Atti and Victoria Garrett



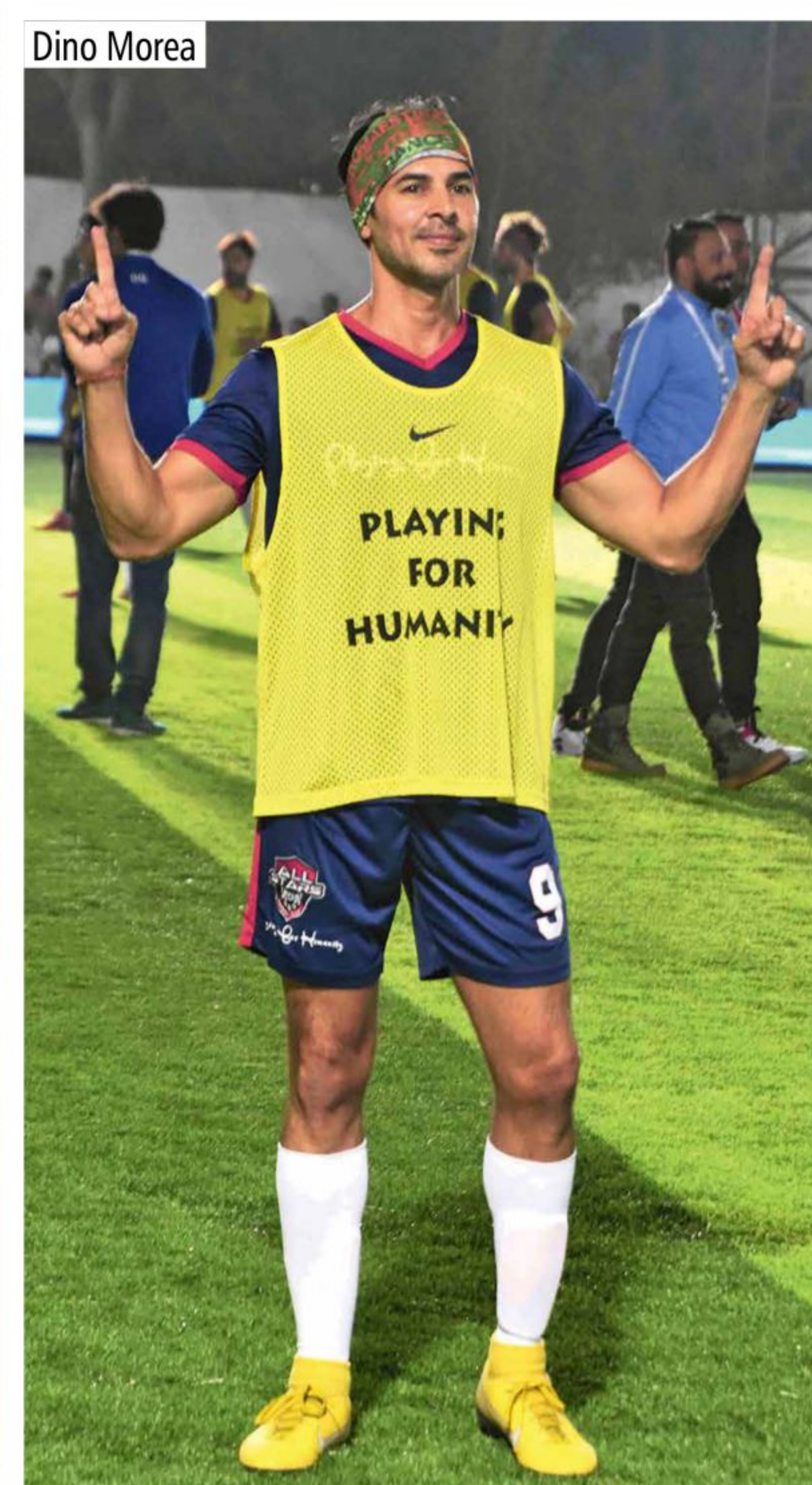
Maharaj Padmanabh Singh of Jaipur



BRITISH POLO DAY celebrated its 71st global occasion in India. With founders Ben Vestey and Tom Hudson, those present included Malcolm Borwick, Alexandra, Peter Prentice, Torquhil Campbell, Victoria Garrett, Maharaj Gaj Singh of Jodhpur and Lady Katharina Chelsea.

Violet and Emma Manner





JAIRAJ THACKER & SUJAY JAIRAJ inaugurated Jamnabai Narsee Playground in Mumbai. Celebrities such as Abhishek Bachchan, Ishaan Khattar, Dino Morea, Jim Sarbh, Shabir Ahluwalia and Sachin Joshi played a match as a sign of opening of the playground.

Teejay Siddhu



CUTENESS OVERLOAD

Amrita Puri



Ashmit Patel and Mahek Chahal



Basab Paul



CHEF SANJAY KOTIAN inaugurated the Italian Bistro Mia Cucina in Bandra, Mumbai. The event was attended by prominent faces such as Amrita Puri, Basab Paul, Fatima Sana Shaikh, Ronit Roy, Sanjay Gupta, Ritika Jolly, Teejay Siddhu, Samir Soni, Ira Khan and Sanya Malhotra.

Ritika Jolly and Samir Soni



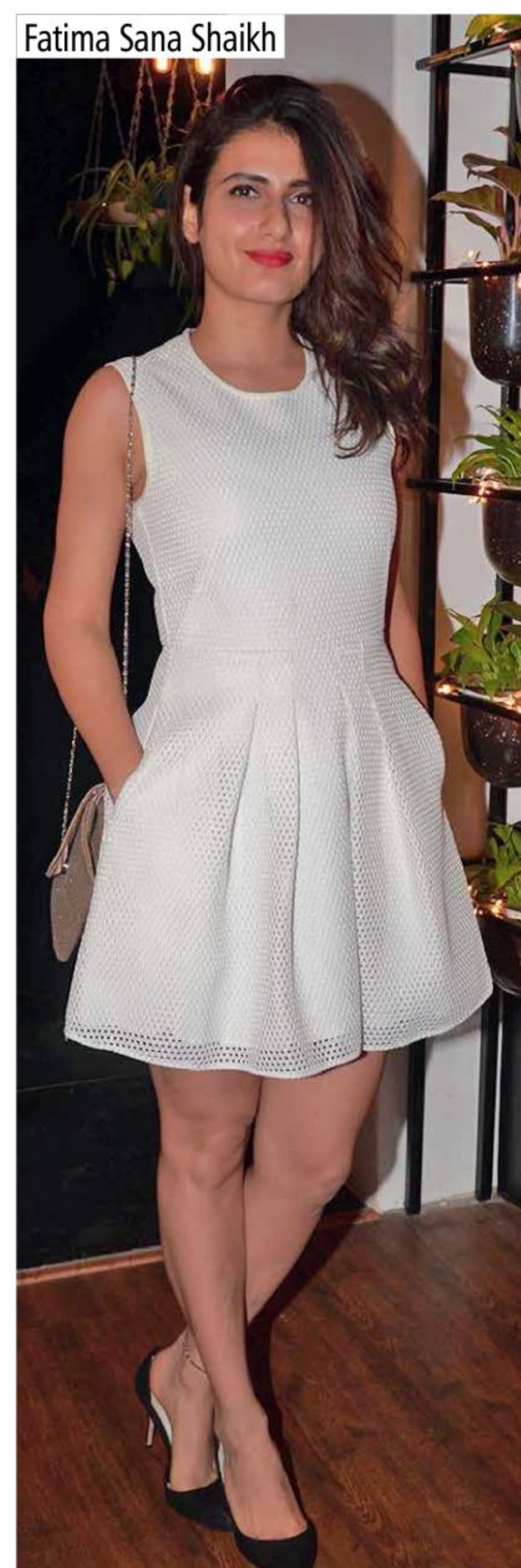
Sanjay Gupta with Chef Sanjay Kotian



Ira Khan and Sanya Malhotra



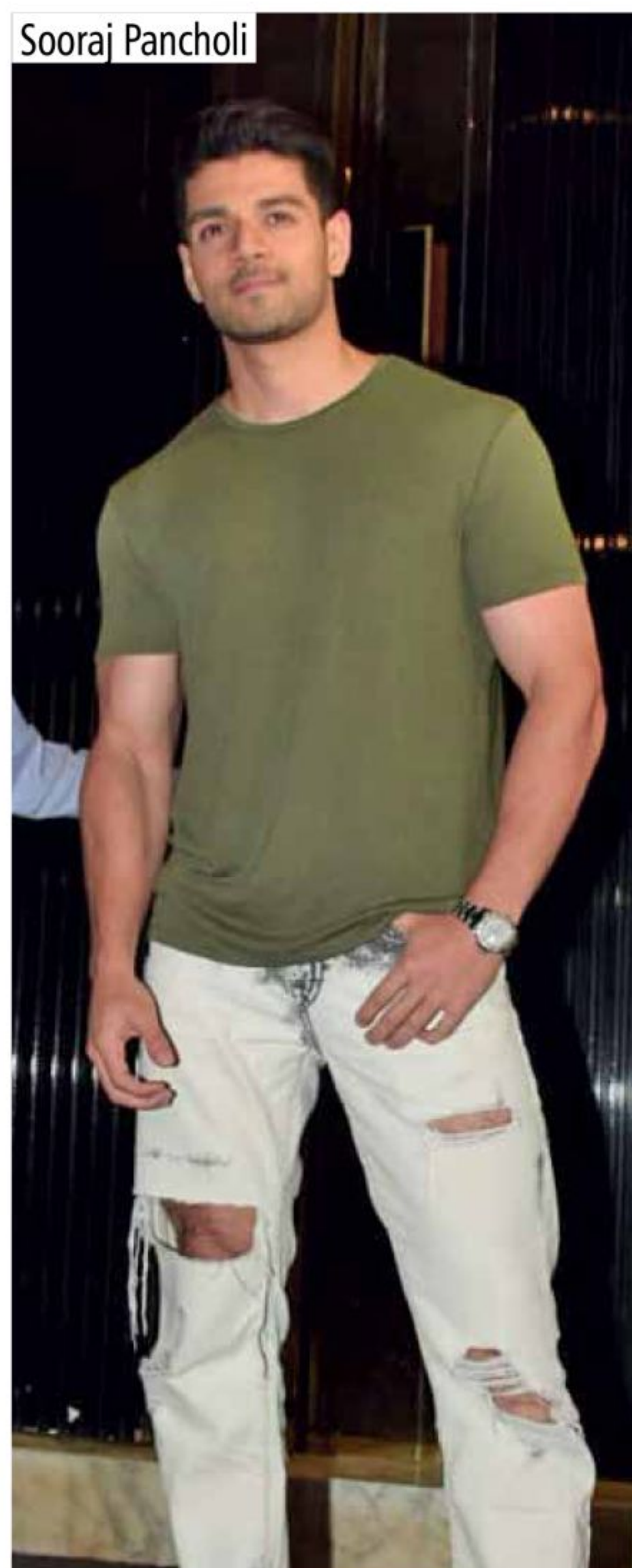
Fatima Sana Shaikh



Zoa Morani



Sooraj Pancholi



Alvira and Atul Agnihotri



Nikhil Dwivedi

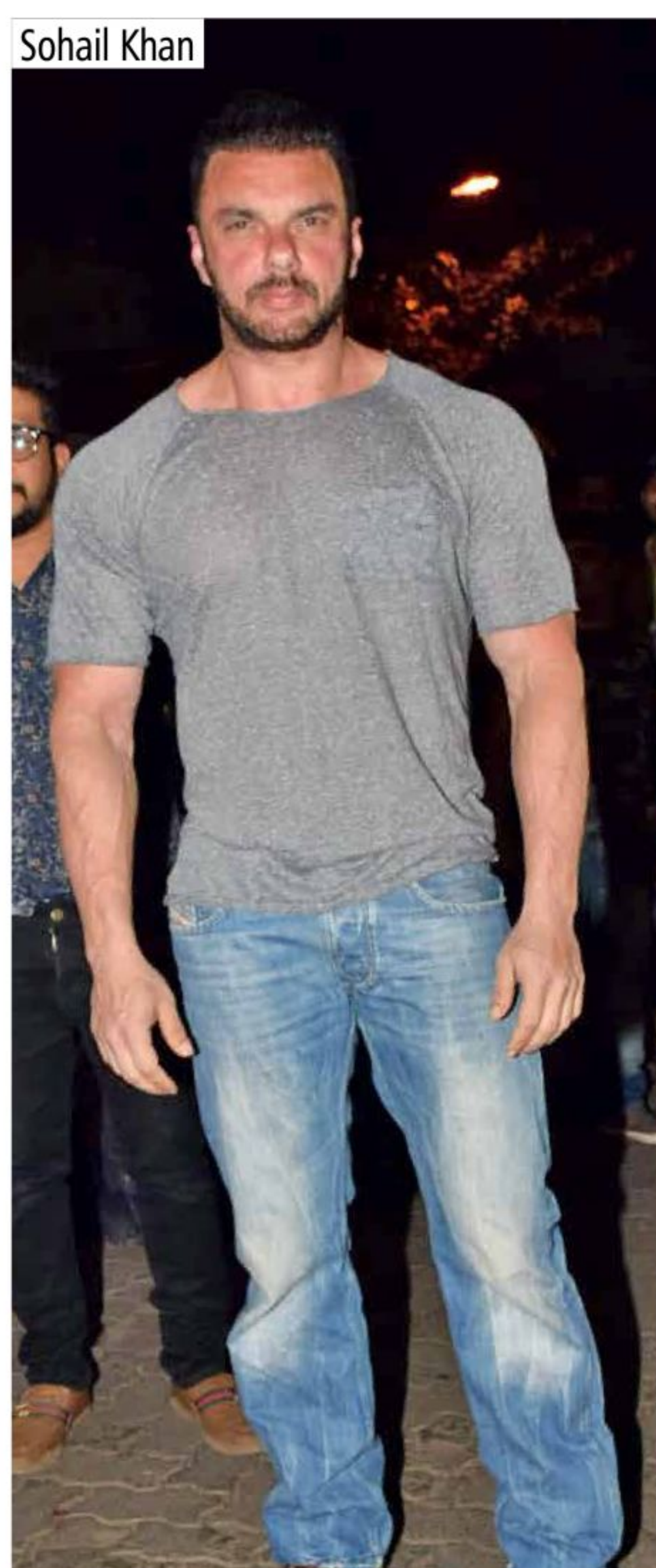


ZAHEER IQBAL celebrated his birthday with a bash in Bandra, Mumbai. The guest list included his close friends such as Salman Khan, Sohail Khan, Sonakshi Sinha, Zoa Morani, Sooraj Pancholi, Ayush Sharma and Nikhil Dwivedi.

Ayush Sharma and Zaheer Iqbal



Sohail Khan



Salman Khan



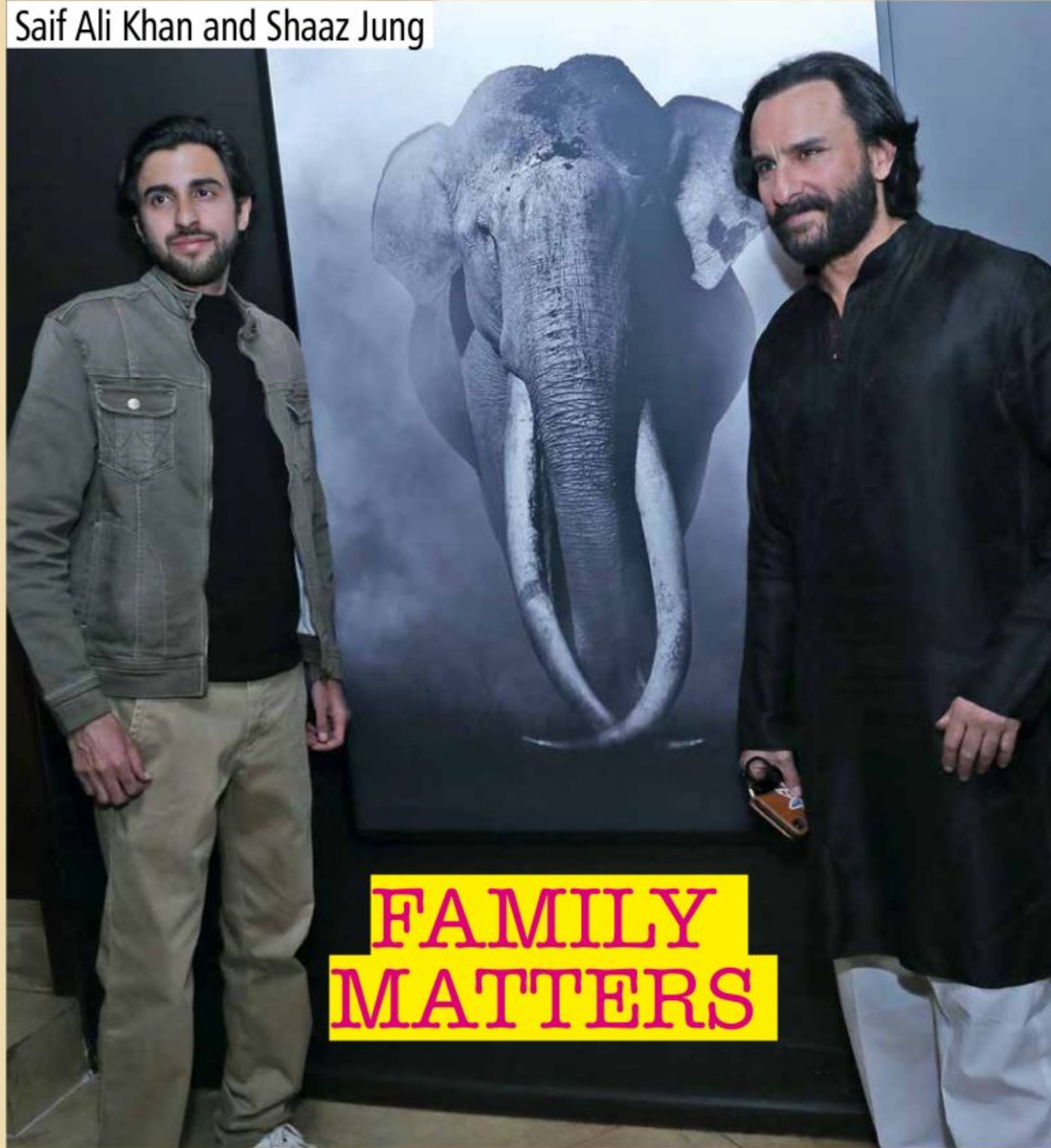
Sonakshi Sinha



Dia Mirza and Sahil



Saif Ali Khan and Shaaz Jung



Naintara



Tanisha and Tanuja Mukherjee



SHAAZ JUNG organised his first photography exhibition in Mumbai. The occasion was attended by various celebrities such as his cousin Saif Ali Khan, Dia Mirza, Nandita Mahtani, Rhea Pillai, Surily Goel and Tanishaa and Tanuja Mukherjee.

Mohammed Jafar



Phil Murphy and Tammy Snyder



Kerry Kennedy



Meera Gandhi and Alec Baldwin



MEERA GANDHI, a notable philanthropist, attended the Robert F Kennedy Human Rights' Ripple of Hope Awards in Manhattan, New York. Amongst eminent attendees were Kerry Kennedy, Alec Baldwin, Tammy Snyder, Phil Murphy and Mohammed Jafar.

Francoise Sturdza and Pria Kataaria Puri



Nivedita Saboo and Tina Singh



Smita Thackerey



Terence Lewis



Shibani Kashyap



PARKINSON'S DISEASE and Movement Disorder Society organised an awareness event in collaboration with Dr Cheryl Misquitta and Dipankar Zalpuri. Notable personalities like Tina Singh, Nivedita Saboo, Smita Thackerey, Terence Lewis and Shibani Kashyap were present to support the cause.

Ila Naidu, Chita Patti, Tanya Eldred-Bhat and Zohara Jamal



Urvashi Joneja, Deepa Reddy, Bhramini Reddy Nagar and Vybhava Raj



Eashita Bajwa, Sneha and Harita



URVASHI JONEJA showcased the latest collection of her art pieces at Bren Center in Bangalore. The event was graced by multiple socialites including Ila Naidu, Zohara Jamal, Tanya Eldred Bhat, Eashita Bajwa, Sneha and Deepa Reddy.

Aishwarya



Sanobar and Tareen



Aadev Arjun



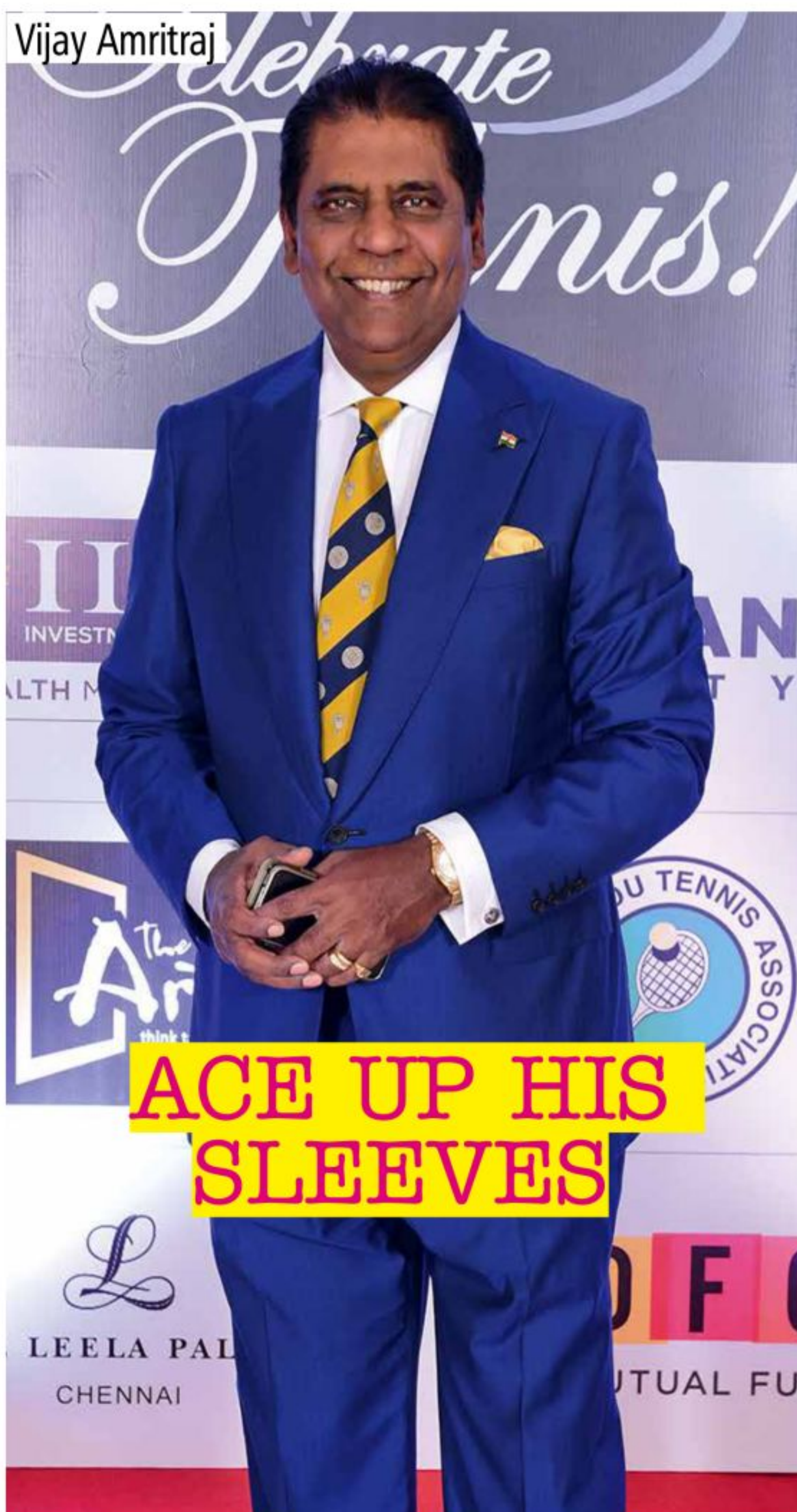
L Ramachandran



Geeta Nagu



Vijay Amritraj



Shreya and Vivek



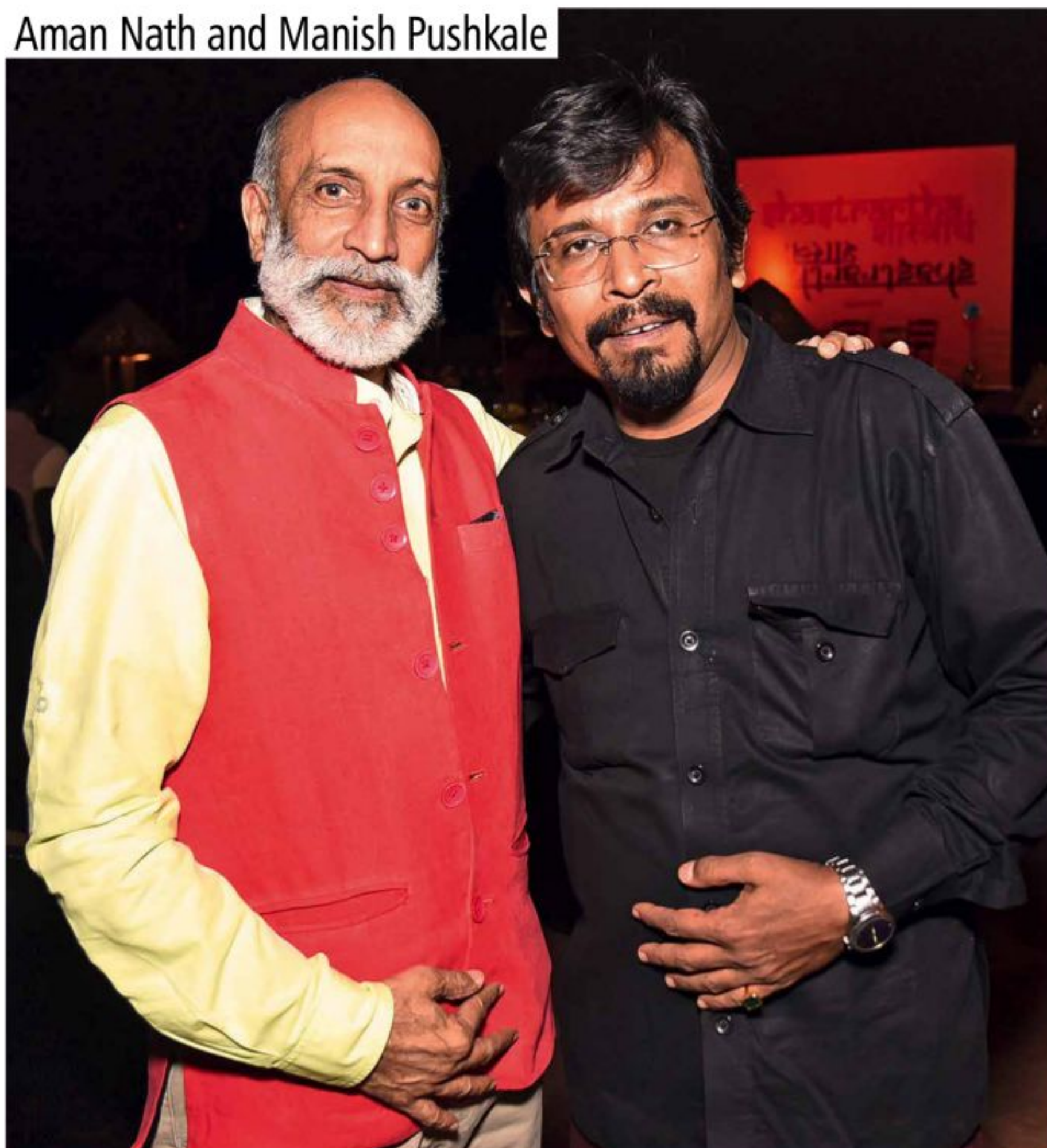
Suresh Menon



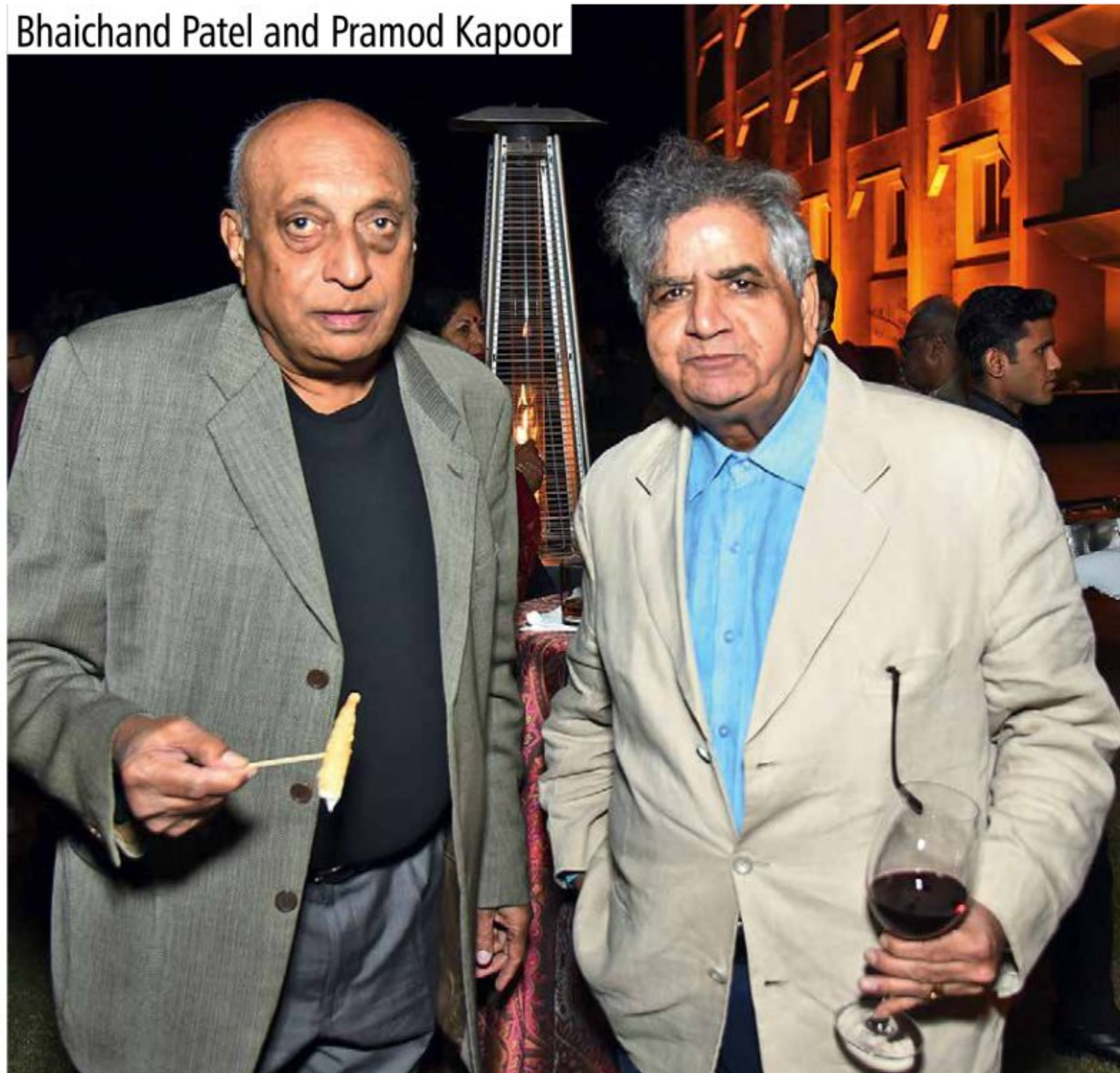
ACE UP HIS SLEEVES

VIJAY AMRITRAJ hosted a get together namely 'Celebrate Tennis' on the account of his taking over as the President of Tamil Nadu Tennis Association (TNTA) at Leela palace in Chennai. Amongst other well-known personalities, Aadev Arjun, Geeta Nagu, L Ramachandran, Suresh Menon and Vijay Amritraj were present for the event.

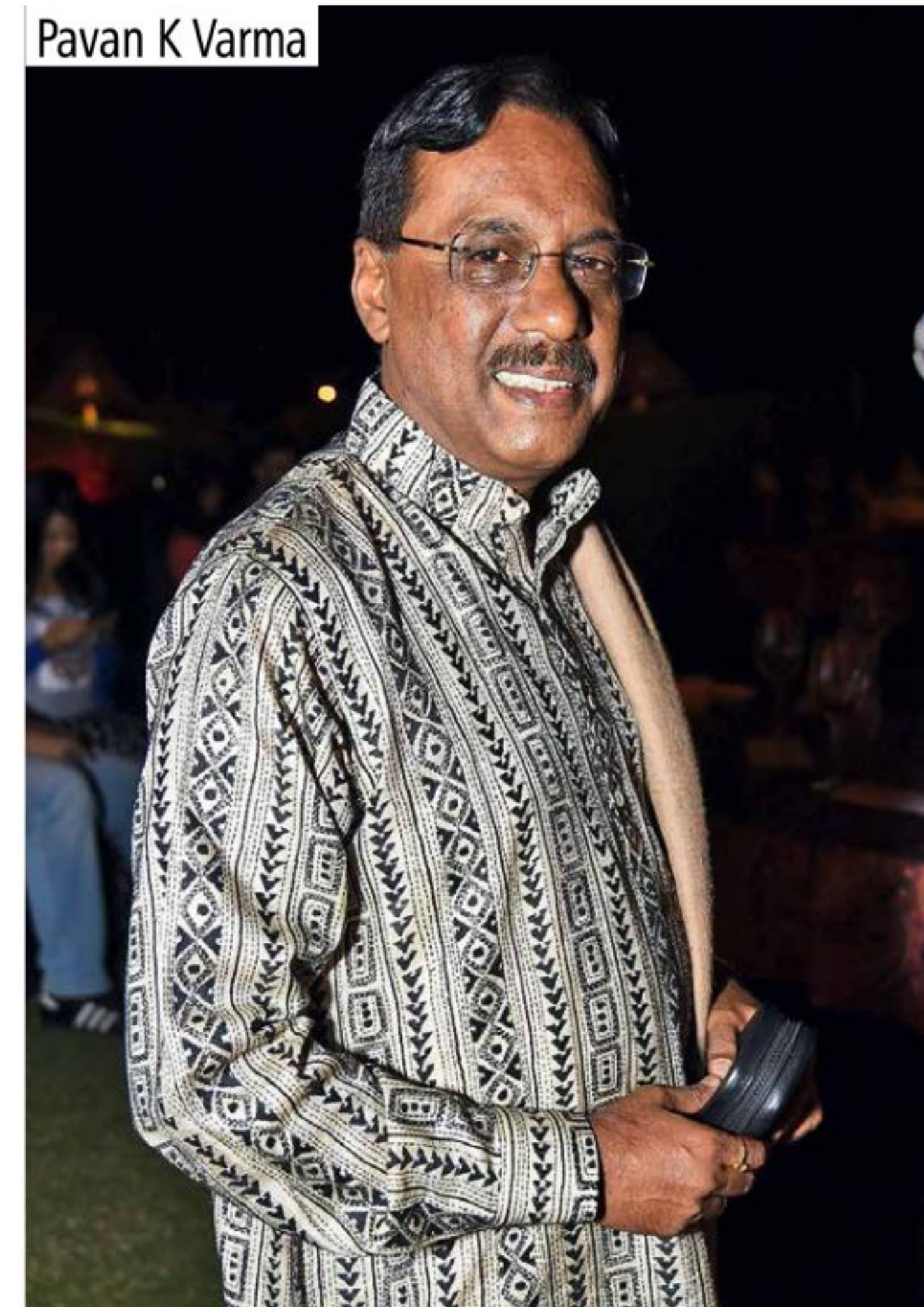
Aman Nath and Manish Pushkale



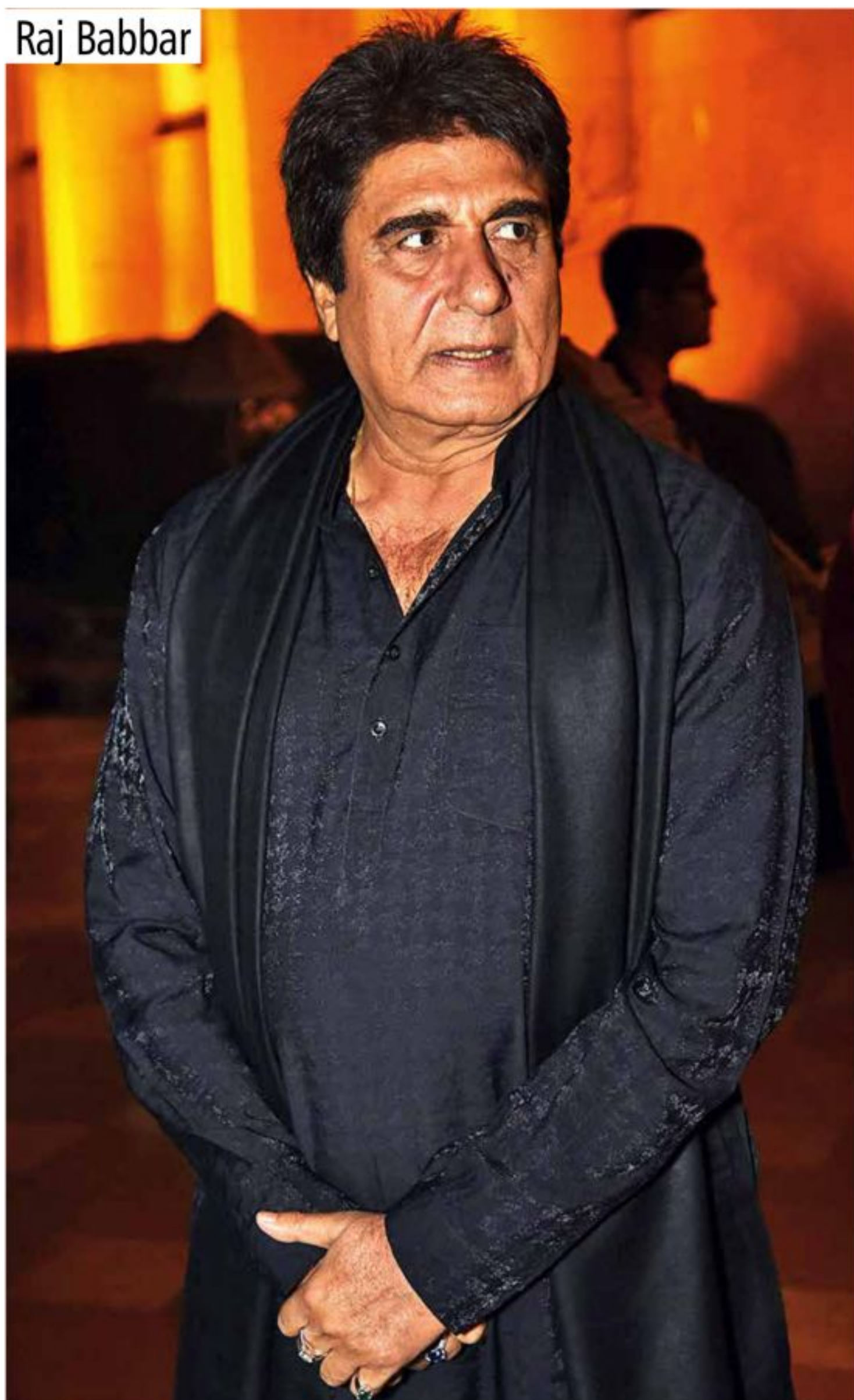
Bhaichand Patel and Pramod Kapoor



Pavan K Varma

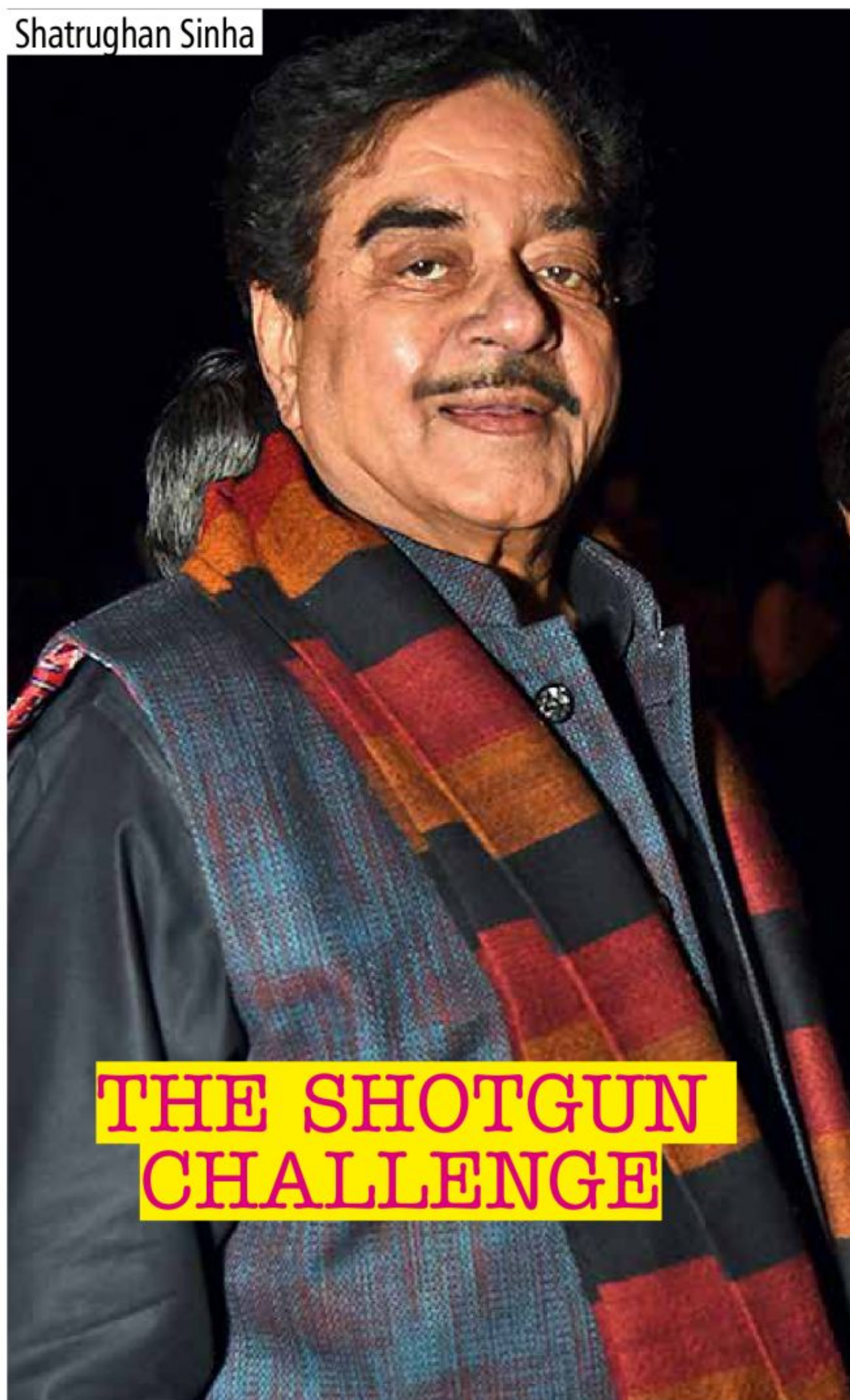


Raj Babbar



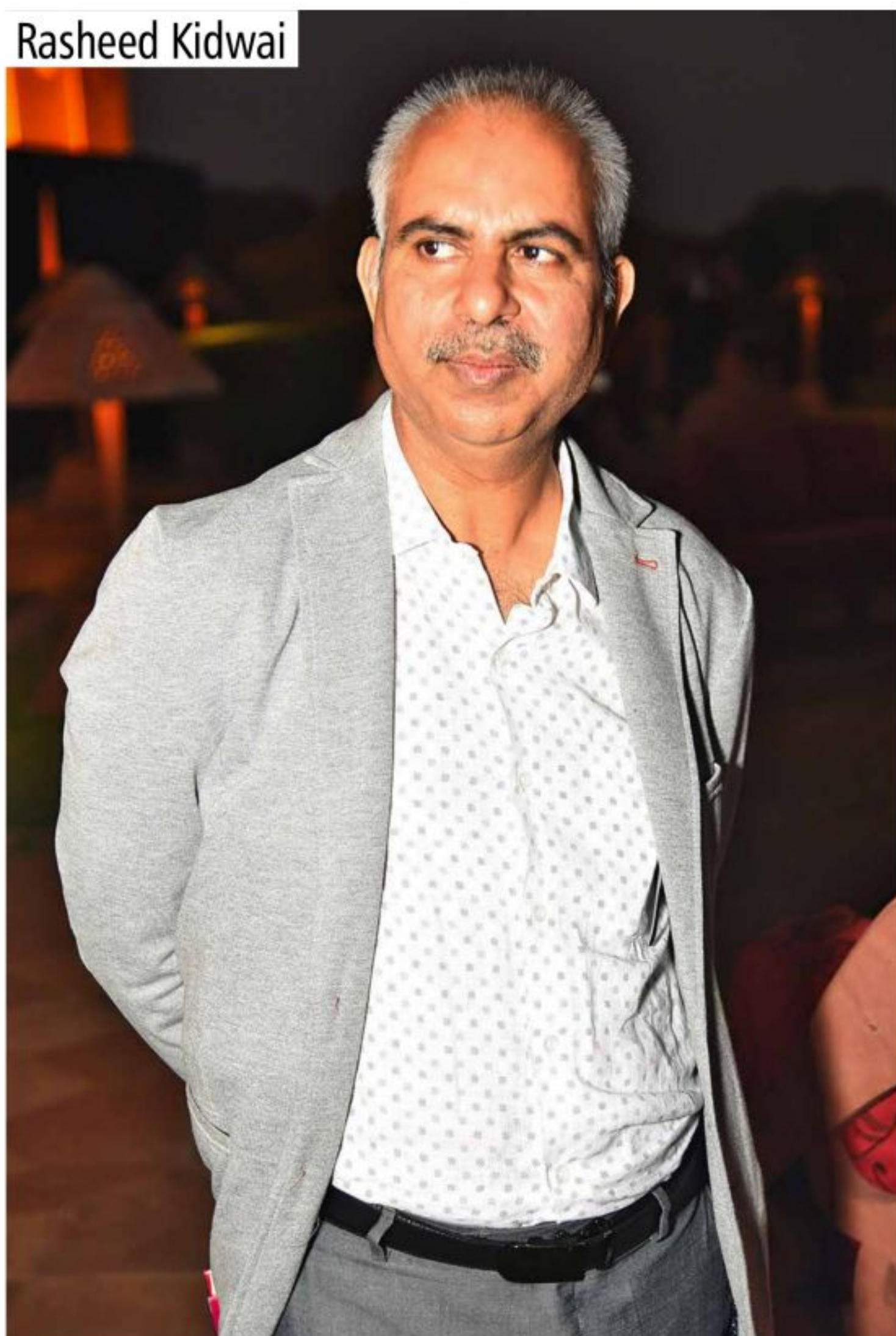
PAVAN K VARMA, Manish Pushkale and Nita Khanna hosted a discussion at Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi. Shatrughan Sinha was in conversation with Raj Babbar on 'Stardom in Indian Politics' and it was moderated by Rasheed Kidwai. Attendees included Aman Nath, Bhaichand Patel, Pramod Kapoor, Renuka Varma and Kamna Pushkale.

Shatrughan Sinha



THE SHOTGUN CHALLENGE

Rasheed Kidwai



Rekha Surya, Sunita Kohli and Nita Khanna



Renuka Varma and Kamna Pushkale



Bikram Baidyanath



Chandni, Aliya Gulati and Pawan Chawle



Patrik Sjogren, Ludovic Ballouard, Nergs Nazar and Rahul Kapoor



THE INDIA Watch Club hosted an exclusive preview of the Independents of Time at Novele in New Delhi hosted by Rahul Kapoor, Founder, India Watch Club and Mohit Jaen, Owner, Novele. It saw Delhi's swish set from high profile industrialists and socialites to diplomats and designers in full attendance.

Kamini Sinha and Sushmita Clay



Harpreet and Preeti Singh



Nauhar and Suneeta Rana



Neera Nath



Neha Wadhwa and Nishant Arora



Kiran Junejar and Ramesh Sippy



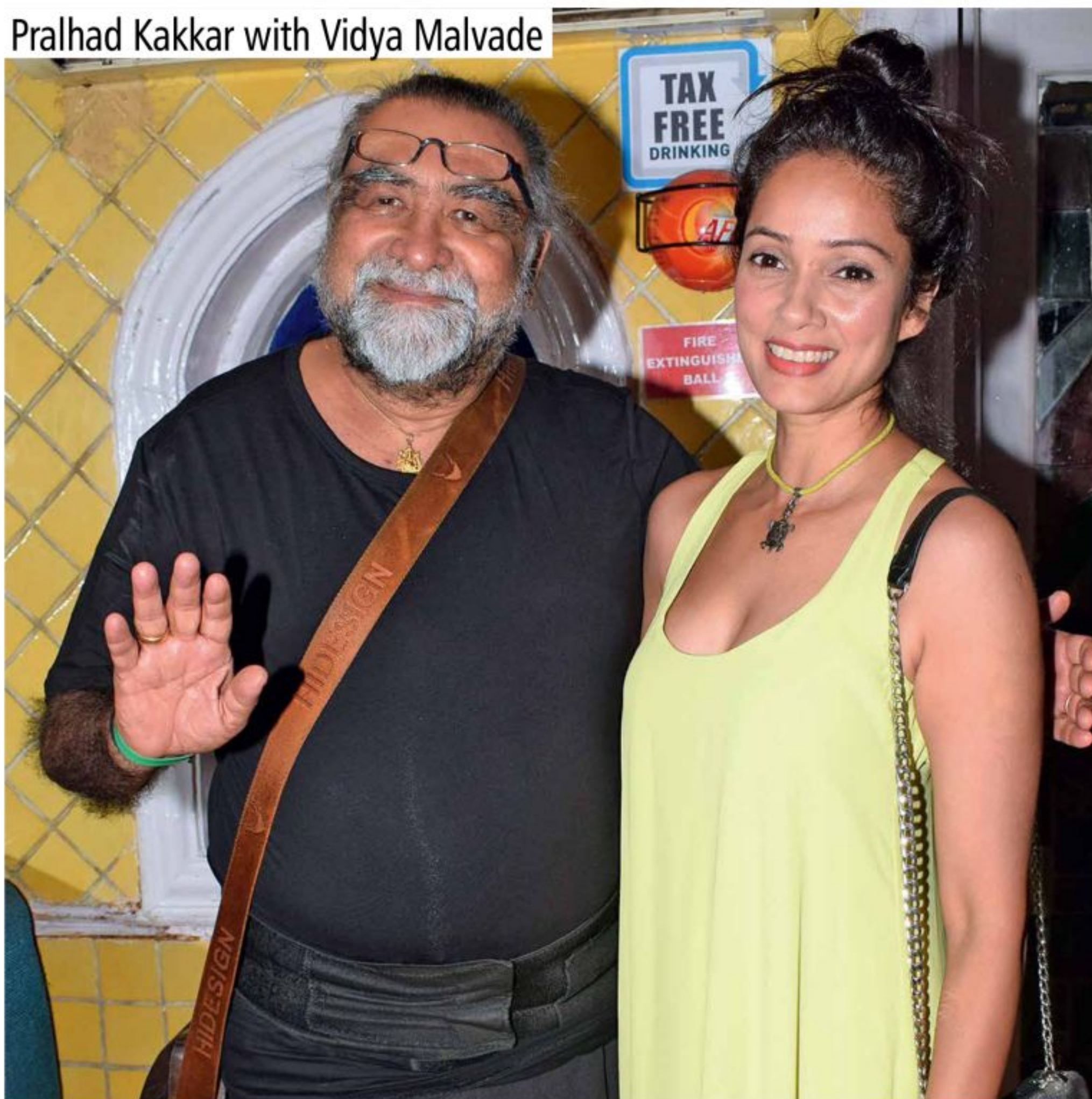
Deepa and Dr Suhas Awchat



Kunika Lal



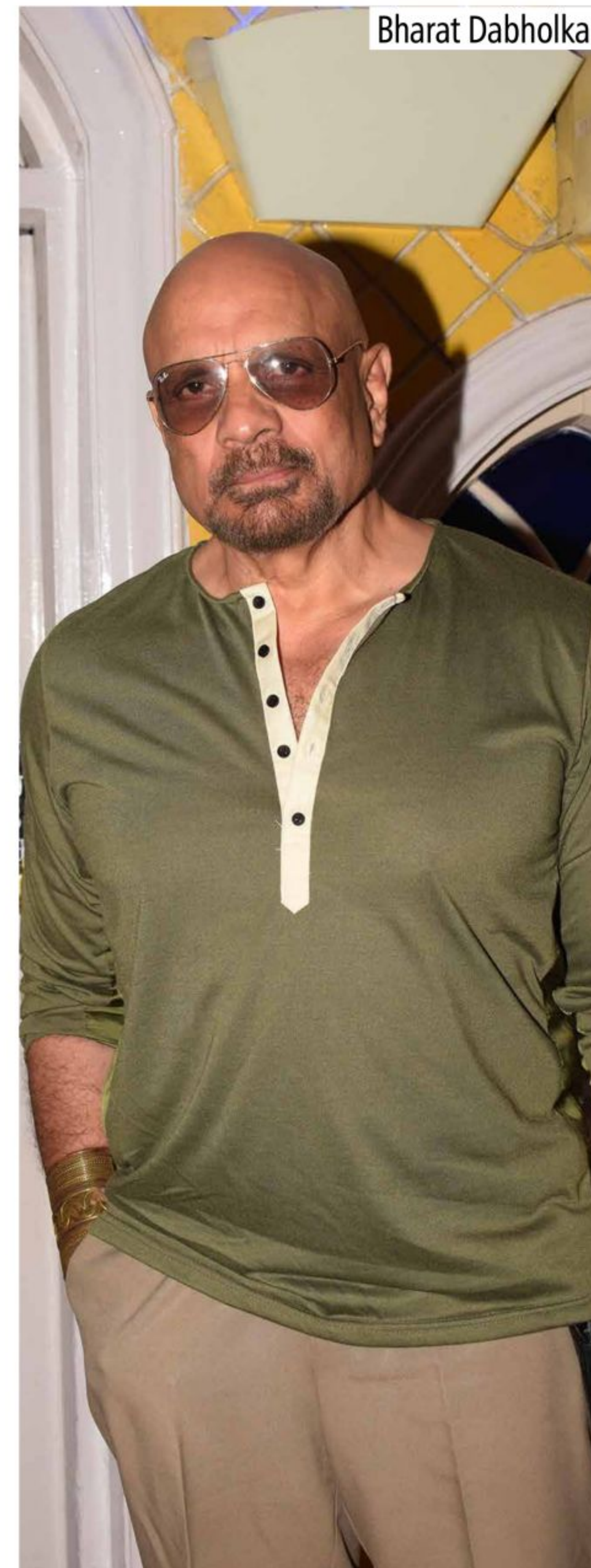
Pralhad Kakkar with Vidya Malvade



FOOD FOR
THOUGHT

GOA PORTUGUESA celebrated its 30th anniversary of gourmet venture in Matunga, Mumbai. Along with owners Dr Suhas and Deepa Awchat, the attendees included Ramesh Sippy, Kiran Juneja, Sanjeev Kapoor, Pralhad Kakkar, Kunika Lal, Bharat Dabholkar and Vidya Malvade.

Bharat Dabholkar



Dr Januma Pai



Sanjeev Kapoor



Varsha Usgaokar



Ultra modern kitchen
Stylish kitchen sink!



Presenting ORUS Kitchen Sink in the Silent Square Range.

Blending ultra sophisticated anti-scratch finish, aesthetics, durability, utility and value.

Nirali understands perfectly the needs of every modern Indian kitchen-2 deeper bowls, one in 16"x16" and the other bowl in 11"x11" gives you the ideal advantage of separating larger cooking vessels from the fragile cups, saucers and glasses. What's more, its silent sound reducing coating used in the sink reduces vibrations from dishes and running water.

Also available in futuristically crafted glossy and satin finishes.

THE LARGEST AND WIDEST RANGE OF SINKS IN INDIA



Silent Range



Expell Range



Magnus Range



D'signo Range



Popular Range

Mfd. & Mktd. by: **Jyoti (India) Metal Industries Pvt. Ltd.**, Post Box No.: 9136, Worli, Mumbai 400025. Tel: 022-24315500 / 11/22 (10 lines) Email: nirali@nirali.com **Sales enquiries: sales@nirali.com;**

Nirali Designer Gallery : MUMBAI : Shop No. 2, Mansarovar Building, Near Standard Chartered Bank, Opp. Vijay Sales, S. V. Road, Santacruz (West), Mumbai: 400 054. Tel: 022-32424874/8080824874.

PUNE: Shop No. 5, Thacker's House, 2418, East Street, General Thimayya Rd., Pune - 411 001, Maharashtra. Cell.: 09820085946.

Delhi Branch Office: Plot No. S-26, Ground Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi - 110 020. Cell: 09350043092. Email: niralidelhi@nirali.com.

For more information, please visit www.niralisinks.com

India's No. 1
NIRALI
STAINLESS STEEL KITCHEN SINKS



PAY ONLY FOR WHAT YOU DRINK INTRODUCING LIVPURE SMART



A unique 'Pay For What You Drink' service that gives you all the benefits of an RO water purifier without the hassles of owning one.



ZERO INVESTMENT



ZERO MAINTENANCE



ZERO INSTALLATION
CHARGES



ZERO HASSLES

livpure  **smart**

POWERED BY **HICKA**

For enquiries, call our customer care number: 1800 - 419 - 9399 / 080 - 6191- 4384 or mail us at care@livpuresmart.com



@LivpureSmart



@livpuresmart



@Livpuresmart